CAMÕES
INSTITUTO
DA COOPERAÇÃO
E DA LÍNGUA
PORTUGAL
MINISTÉRIO DOS NEGÓCIOS ESTRANGEIROS

PORTUGAL/TIMOR-LESTE STRATEGIC COOPERATION PROGRAM EVALUATION (2019-2023)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2024

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The **subject** of the evaluation was the Strategic Cooperation Program (PEC) Portugal/Timor-Leste, a program that establishes the partnership framework for development between the two countries in the period 2019-2023,

Its **purpose** is to support Camões, I.P. and the partner country in the process of planning future actions, aiming to reinforce joint learning dynamics of interested parties, identify opportunities for improvement and provide recommendations to be considered in future programming cycles.

In terms of **scope**, the exercise focuses on the processes and actors involved in designing, programming and implementing the PEC.

The **methodological approach** adopted was based on the theoretical framework of the Portuguese Cooperation Strategy 2030, the European Commission's guidelines for planning and programming development aid, the 2016 OECD recommendation on risk management, the 2022 OECD Council Recommendation on Public Policy Evaluation and a review of the literature related to the phenomenon of fragility, which is inseparable from the context of Timor-Leste.

In order to respond to the **evaluation criteria** adopted - (i) relevance, (ii) coherence, (iii) efficiency, (iv) effectiveness, (v) impact and (vi) sustainability, in line with the OECD/DAC Principles for Evaluation - and the evaluation questions defined, mixed methods were used during data collection, processing and analysis: literature review; documentary analysis; interviews with key interlocutors and case studies for a more detailed analysis of the implementation of selected interventions.

The **conclusions** are the following:

1. The intervention developed within the framework of the PEC was relevant, as it remained aligned with the Timor-Leste Strategic Development Plan 2011-2030 (PED 2011-2030) and based on dialogue between the partners, addressing the country's foreseen and unforeseen needs, planning and implementation that would benefit from a more frequent evaluation practices of the projects.

2. There was a strengthening of Timor-Leste's assumption of financial responsibility in the education sector, showing growing ownership.

3. Among the ongoing projects in the education sector, although interventions complement each other across all educational levels, with informal and occasional approaches, no formal complementarity was identified that could leverage resources and results, limiting effectiveness.

4. Formal coordination with international actors working in Timor-Leste is sporadic, compromising harmonization, although the dialogue is maintained through participation in donor meetings promoted by the Timorese authorities.

5. The PEC has a Results Monitoring Matrix and a Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Monitoring Matrix, but it does not quantify the indicators, nor does it present a baseline data and annual targets, which restricts the ability to gather evidence on the results and impact of Portuguese Cooperation.

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7. Difficulties persist in the coordination between different actors, particularly the Portuguese Cooperation Centre in Dili, Camões, I.P. headquarters, project coordination teams, and Timorese partners. These problems are accentuated in projects implemented directly by Camões I.P. in co-financing with Timor-Leste.

8. There were shortcomings in risk management and the respective mitigation measures due to the absence of risk analysis at the PEC level, the differentiated practices in the PPA, and the lack of understanding and clarification of the concept among cooperation actors, highlighting a misalignment with the best practices and European recommendations in this area.

9. The PEC financial execution rate stood at 82% (as of December 31, 2022), with the most expected results achieved across different PPA interventions despite the impact of COVID-19 control and prevention measures on COVID-19.

10. It can be stated that Portuguese Cooperation, despite shortcomings, has contributed to Timor-Leste´s national development effort in sectors integrated as priorities in the PED 2011-2030, particularly in Education, which absorbs 78% of the overall amount of the PEC. It is considered that more investment in Pre-school Education would bring significant benefits, enhancing interventions at the basic and secondary levels.

11. Regarding the allocation of human resources, the projects in the Education sector, namely FOCO.UNTL and Pro-Português faced constraints due to increasing difficulties in recruiting Cooperation Agents with the suitable profiles and continued delays in salary supplements by Timorese authorities, impacting effectiveness and efficiency.

12. The impact of the CAFE project is recognized, accounting for 37% of the PEC's overall funding, with an increase in the number of schools, students, Timorese teachers, and geographic coverage. However, the absence of rotation of teachers trained by CAFE to other schools prevents other educational institutions from benefiting, reducing the expected impact.

13. The CAFE, Pro-Português, and FOCO.UNTL projects have trained a group of Timorese trainers and teachers, providing an effective response to the need for teacher qualification in Timor-Leste, which, with the appropriate legal and institutional framework, represents a significant opportunity for the sustainability of these actions.

14. Through FOCO.UNTL, there has been significant progress in the scientific preparation of UNTL teachers in the areas of assessment and certification of Portuguese language skills, positioning its Portuguese Language Centre as the entity that can take on this role in Timor-Leste with increasing autonomy.

15. The FOCO.UNTL project also produced a set of audiovisual resources that were not initially planned for teaching Portuguese language but had a significant impact on younger audiences. This action aligns with Timor-Leste's investment in audiovisual teaching resources under the *Eskola Ba Uma Project* (School at Home).

16. The positive results of the *Consultório da Língua para Jornalistas* (CLJ) project in Portuguese language and journalism training, in close collaboration with

Timorese media, are recognized. However, the lack of a partnership with an educational institution in this area hinders the certification of the training and reveals the absence of an exit strategy.

17. The cooperation between the Ministry of Labour, Solidarity and Social Security of Portugal (MTSSS – PT) and the Ministry of Social Solidarity and Inclusion (MSSI – TL) has continued a highly consistent work in the social sector through institutional capacity building, contributing to the establishment of the Social Security Reserve Fund and the creation of the Social Security Portal, with a significant impact on Timorese society.

18. Cooperation in the agriculture/ agroforestry sector through the Quinta Portugal project, despite the recognized efforts to increase the agroforestry centre's value and train farmers and technicians, still operates with minimal human and financial resources. A clear strategy is needed to address the country's needs and the need to harmonize actions with other development partners seeking synergies.

19. Cooperation in the field of Justice, and Technical-Police sectors, highly relevant to Timor-Leste's development strategy, relies excessively on advisory services and specialized technical assistance, which perpetuates difficulties in ownership and sustainability.

20. Cooperation in the Social and Sovereignty sectors includes a very significant training component, but the limited Portuguese language proficiency of many Timorese professionals remains a barrier to training and knowledge transfer, reducing impact.

21. The PEC theoretically integrates commitments and topics from international agendas, such as SDGs, gender equality promotion, Human Rights and support for vulnerable groups, which are present in the discourse of both Portuguese and Timorese cooperation actors. However, no explicit guidelines for their application in the PPA were identified, making their effects less visible and difficult to measure.

Taking the conclusions into account, the following **recommendations** were made:

Recommendation 1. (C.1)

Given the importance of evaluation in the context of aid effectiveness, as expressed in the Portuguese Cooperation Strategy 2030, to ensure Relevance, Efficiency, Effectiveness, Impact and Sustainability, particularly in the Education, Training and Culture sector, which absorbs 78% of the total of PEC funding, we recommend:

1.Joint external evaluation of the CAFE and FOCO.UNTL projects.

2.Impact Evaluation of the Portugal/ Timor-Leste Cooperation in Education and Training.

Recommendation 2. (C.3)

Given the lack of formal coordination between projects, particularly in the Education sector, it is suggested to design a strategy for the qualification of the Timorese education system and to strengthen proficiency in Portuguese, implemented by creating complementarity and mutual synergies to maximize resources and results.

Also relevant to this purpose is the need to identify Portuguese higher education institutions already working in Timor-Leste to establish partnerships.

Recommendation 3. (C.3)

Considering the importance of sharing experiences between projects, creating mutual learning, and increasing the visibility of Portuguese Cooperation's intervention in the education sector, it is recommended to

create initiatives that are complementary to the *Jornadas Pedagógicas* (Pedagogical Days) promoted annually by UNTL/Portuguese Language Centre, a unit that could increasingly take on this responsibility.

Recommendation 4. (C.3)

Considering the different levels of knowledge and experience in the cooperation context and the Timorese reality, it is recommended that a training program be organized for professionals involved in cooperation projects, particularly those involved in projects in the education sector.

Recommendation 5. (C.4)

Given the importance of donor coordination for the harmonization of actions and the maximization of results, it is recommended that, in the Education sector, there be coordination with other development partners, complementing the actions of Portuguese Cooperation.

Recommendation 6. (C.5 and 6)

For the implementation of Results-Oriented Management, it is recommended to use the Logical Framework and Results Monitoring Matrix for PEC monitoring, through the quantification of indicators and targets, and their monitoring.

Additionally, the Project Documents of all interventions should be standardized by incorporating the logical framework, with the baseline data, indicators, and targets. Reporting should also be standardized by adopting an appropriate technical and financial execution report model for results-oriented management.

Recommendation 7. (C.7)

Considering the problems identified in monitoring, Timor-Leste and Portugal should jointly define the model and procedures for monitoring Portuguese Cooperation, oriented towards results.

The MNEC-TL, as coordinator of aid to Timor-Leste, should have a more active role, whereas Portugal should delegate greater decision-making power to the Portuguese Cooperation Centre in Dili, in accordance with Decree-Law 48/2018 of June 21.

Recommendation 8. (C.8)

Considering the different levels of knowledge and experience in the cooperation context and the Timorese reality, it is recommended that a training program be organized for professionals involved in cooperation projects, particularly those involved in projects in the education sector.

Recommendation 9. (C.10)

In alignment with Timor-Leste's Foreign Aid Policy, which identifies Education as a priority sector for support by Cooperation Partners, it is recommended to continue prioritizing Education. Namely, by expanding the Portuguese Cooperation's interventions at the Pre-School level, given its impact on learning the Portuguese language, as well as on values, attitudes, behaviours, and social and cognitive skills, which enhance the knowledge to be acquired in subsequent levels of Education, as well as the potential for engagement and impact within the educational community.

Recommendation 10. (C.11)

Given the constraints identified in the recruitment of Cooperation Agents, particularly for education and training actions, it is recommended that Decree-Law No. 49/2018 of June 21 be updated to qualify the contractual conditions for Cooperation Agents.

Recommendation 11. (C.11)

Given the continued delays in the payment of salary supplements due by the Timorese authorities to the Cooperation Agents, it is recommended that Camões, I.P. cover the full salary of the Cooperation Agents

assigned to its projects, holding the Timorese authorities responsible for paying a monthly allowance to support their installation and housing costs.

Recommendation 12. (C.12)

To maximize the impact of CAFE's actions, it is necessary to rotate Timorese teachers assigned to the project to other schools, maximizing the resources invested.

Recommendation 13. (C.13)

To ensure the sustainability of training actions for Timorese teachers and trainers, it is recommended to approve the Teacher and Trainer Career Framework, ensuring that the training received by each Timorese professional leads to tangible outcomes, particularly through career consolidation/progression and salary increases.

Recommendation 14. (C.13)

For the same purpose, Timorese authorities should also promote mechanisms to integrate Timorese professionals into national institutions, particularly those trained within the scope of projects and beneficiaries of undergraduate, master's, and doctoral scholarships, as agents of change and trainers for their peers.

Recommendation 15. (C.14)

Recognizing the development of the Portuguese Language Centre at UNTL, it is recommended that it increasingly assume a central role in Timor-Leste in research and the production of scientific knowledge, validation of teaching materials, and certification of language proficiency. This should benefit not only UNTL itself but also other governmental and civil society entities. To this end, it should be provided with the human and financial resources necessary to autonomously fulfill its leading role as the scientific-pedagogical support for cooperation projects related to the Portuguese Language.

Recommendation 16. (C.15)

Recognizing the pertinence of Timor-Leste's investment in audiovisual educational resources and the impact of those produced under FOCO.UNTL, it is recommended that, in a future cycle, the production of audiovisual resources for teaching the Portuguese language as a planned activity, as well as non-formal education activities, be highly relevant for fostering familiarity with the language.

Recommendation 17. (C.16)

Considering the need to consolidate and ensure the sustainability of the training actions promoted by the *Consultório da Língua para Jornalistas* (CLJ) project, it is recommended to establish a partnership with UNTL - degree in Social Communication-, the only Timorese institution with training and certification competences within the scope of this project.

Recommendation 18. (C.18)

For the continuity of cooperation in the agroforestry sector it is recommended, as in the evaluation of the previous PEC, to conduct a diagnostic study of this area, analyzing the positioning of Portuguese Cooperation concerning the multiplicity of development partners in the agricultural and agroforestry sectors.

Recommendation 19. (C.19)

To ensure the necessary sustainability of cooperation in the Justice sector, it is recommended to implement a project in partnership with the UNTL Faculty of Law and/or the Legal Training Centre of Timor-Leste to promote the progressive autonomy of Timorese legal professionals. In this regard, the presence of Portuguese higher education institutions already supporting UNTL in this domain is particularly relevant.

Recommendation 20. (C.20)

Recognizing that Portuguese Cooperation has a very significant training component and that the persistent difficulty in the Portuguese language proficiency of many Timorese professionals is a barrier to knowledge transfer, it is recommended to reinforce cooperation in the Portuguese Language through UNTL's Portuguese Language Centre and capitalize on professionals trained under various projects and scholarship beneficiaries.

Recommendation 21. (C.21)

Recognizing the absence, in the design of the PPA, of specific indicators sensitive to gender equality, Human Rights, support for vulnerable groups, and the SDGs, it is recommended to develop indicators and targets that allow an assessment of the contribution of Camões I.P. to these cross-cutting issues.