



Local Governance Monthly Bulletin

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Local Government as the Key to Development

Four District Assemblies Prepare 2008 Investment Plans

New pilot districts that have begun working with the Local Development Programme (LDP) in 2008, Baucau, Ainaro, Manufahi and Covalima, have successfully completed the planning process at the aldeia, suco and sub-district level, and begun the planning process at the district level. During May, three important planning meetings have been held at each district capital: the Planning and Implementation Commission meeting, the second District Assembly meeting, and the District Integrated Workshop. The three meetings are held in order to review the technical evaluations from the verification and evaluation process, finalize the draft investment plan for the 2008 Local Development Funds, and to present this investment plan to district-level stakeholders.

Project Proposals Evaluated at PIC Meeting

The first step of the District Assembly in selecting which projects will be funded from the Local Development Funds is to check the technical viability of all proposals submitted from the Sub-District Development Committees (SDDC). Assemblies pick a sub-set of Assembly members to work on the Planning and Implementation Committee (PIC) with three technical professionals. The PIC is responsible for checking the data on all proposals such as the number of beneficiaries, the project location, environmental considerations, as well as other criteria. The Covalima PIC meeting was held on 27 May to evaluate the 47 proposals submitted from the SDDCs and sector departments. The objective of this meeting was to check these projects for technical viability and then rank the projects in each sector based on the established criteria.

After discussions, the PIC committee eliminated some projects from consideration because problems were discovered at the project site during the verification process. For the projects that the PIC verifies as eligible to receive funding from the Local Development

Members of the Covalima PIC prepare a matrix to compare project proposals



Funds, the committee then ranks these proposals according to criteria, such as number of beneficiaries, cost per beneficiary and local contribution, in

order to select the top priorities for the district in each sector and across sectors. In Covalima, the PIC committee chose eight projects at the sub-district level and one project for the district level. The PIC committee doesn't vote on these priorities, but only creates a report showing how the projects compare based on the data in each proposal. This report is submitted to the District Assembly to assist them in deciding on the annual investment plan.

District Assembly Approves Investment Plan



Covalima District Assembly members vote on project proposals at the district level for the annual investment plan

The second meeting of the District Assembly (DA) is called to discuss the report submitted by the CPI team and to create a draft investment plan for the allocation of the Local Development Funds. The second Covalima DA meeting was held on 28 May. To

discuss the proposals that were verified by the CPI team, as well as the reasons why some proposals were eliminated, and then the DA voted on whether to accept the proposals recommended by the CPI. The Covalima DA passed the CPI-recommended projects at the sub-district level, but did not pass the recommendation for the district-level proposal. Instead, the DA passed a motion voting funds for four different projects.

"We as the Assembly are contributing by carefully looking at which projects will benefit the community. It's not private interests of the Suco or Sub-District, but [we make decisions] on the interests of the Covalima District," said Mr. Alarico Augustino, a District Assembly member from Fohoren Sub-District.

District Integrated Workshop

Having approved the draft annual investment plan, the next step for the DA is to socialize this plan to local stakeholders, such as NGOs and different sector departments, to ensure effective coordination. The District Integrated Workshop in Covalima was held on 29 May, with the draft investment plan for 12 total project presented, and stakeholders were asked to present their programs to ensure that there is no overlap with the DA investment plans. Should a local sector department or an NGO have already planned to fund a project on the investment plan list, then they sign an MOU with the District Assembly stating that they are completing this project, and the District Assembly will pick another project from the list of

priorities. In Covalima the investment plan did not overlap with any other programs, therefore the DA will now begin to finalize project plans, including an additional verification step, and create appropriate project designs that will be submitted as part of the procurement process.



Representatives from Local NGOs in Covalima present their NGOs programs during the Integrated Workshop



The Decentralization Process Begins in Ministries

The Ministry of State Administration and Territorial Management (MSATM) is working to ensure that line Ministries have adequate input into the drafting of a law proposal local government expected to be completed in 2008. Key Line Ministry officials are now discussing which Ministry functions will be the responsibility of future local governments under a new decentralized structure.

During May, 10 Ministries have established a technical working group which will be responsible for coordinating the work of their Ministry in planning for future decentralization. Each technical working group is currently participating in a seminar organized with support from MSATM on the process of analyzing which functions should be given to local governments in the future.

"In today's meeting, the higher levels such as the directors and focal points of the Ministry of Justice listened to the explanation from the Ministry of State Administration's team about the process and preparations we will be making to support local government and the decentralization process that our Government will be dealing with this coming year," said Mr. Helder Cosme Marcal Belo, the focal point for the Ministry of Justice Technical Working Group and also the head of Administration and Finance in the Department of Land and Property. "Those appointed as focal points are technical experts from each of the Ministry's departments, as they have the expertise about the Ministry's functions in each department and therefore know which functions should be given to the future local governments when we are undergoing decentralization."

Two ministries with a specialized role in the establishment of a decentralized system of governance, the Ministry of Finance and MSATM,

began working with technical experts during May in order to assist Government officials in discussing financial and organizational arrangements for future local governments. Two technical experts worked with the Ministry of Finance from 7-21 May on issues related to the future financial structure of a local government system. An additional technical expert worked with MSATM during 13-28 May to support the MSATM technical working group on issues related to the structure, representation, and issues related to



The Ministry of Justice holds a meeting of the Technical Working Group to discuss the ministry's functions and decentralization on 23 May 2008

the relationship between the central government and future local governments.

The Policy Orientation Guidelines for Local Government and Decentralization, approved by the Council of Ministers in March 2008, delegates the responsibility of coordinating the Ministries' preparation for a local government law proposal to MSATM. The Government will prepare this proposal, with the contributions from these Ministries and civil society, and then submit it to National Parliament, as they are the only institution which can approve the law.

In Brief

- 13-24 June: Technical Mission with Ms. Joanne Morrison and Mr. Holger Pyndt on the legislative proposal for Territorial and Administrative Division (White Paper)
- 15 June: The four new pilot districts, Baucau, Ainaro, Manufahi and Covalima, finalize their 2008 annual district and capital budget investment plans and submit them to MSATM
- 30 June: An evaluation team visits the District Assemblies and SDDCs in the new pilot districts

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Name and Quotation about the Covalima Local Development Programme



Name: Alberto Cardoso , Infrastructure Management in the Covalima District

Quotation:

"This is the first time something like this has come to our district. Before, everything had been centralized. But this is a pilot program, and therefore we also want to work hard so that in the end this pilot program can go well, and the National Government will continue to have faith in us so that we can receive a larger funding allocation than what we are receiving now."