



# Timor-Leste Nutrition Strategic Review

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade  
**Key Findings and Recommendations**

December 2017

## Background

Despite ongoing efforts to improve nutritional status, undernutrition continues as a major development challenge in Timor-Leste. Timor-Leste's malnutrition rates represent a serious public health problem.

Australia's draft Nutrition Strategy aims to support the Government of Timor-Leste (GoTL) to reduce the prevalence of stunting in children aged 0–23 months.

## Purpose

DFAT commissioned a Strategic Review of their nutrition activities (see **Box 1**) to:

- determine whether the Australian Aid program has the right approaches and strategy in place to contribute to reducing malnutrition in Timor-Leste, and
- to identify broad opportunities for improvements.

The review addressed two key questions on relevance and strategy.

### Box 1 DFAT Nutrition Activities

- **Technical assistance (2014 onwards);**
- **President's Nutrition Program (2014–2017)**
- **Hamutuk (2016–2019)**
- **TOMAK (2016–2020)** - a nutrition-sensitive agriculture program; and
- **Australia Timor-Leste Partnership for Human Development (2016–2020)** - nutrition-sensitive programming.





## Review Findings

### Relevance:

- The focus of the DFAT Timor-Leste Country Program to support the nutrition goals of the GoTL is in line with the priorities of the Australian Government. It addresses an urgent need in Timor-Leste; is well aligned with GoTL priorities and is broadly very well received.
- The GoTL established National Council for Food Security, Sovereignty and Nutrition in Timor-Leste (KONSSANTIL) represents a positive commitment, however KONSSANTIL ability to fulfil its ambitious mandate at both the national and sub-national levels remains a challenge and requires ongoing support.
- The GoTL's renewed focus on nutrition under SDG 2 presents a timely opportunity for Australia, as a trusted leader in the area, to build on its responsive and valued support in future programming.

### Strategy:

- The current DFAT portfolio of activities do not yet reflect an effective multi-sectoral approach. Key considerations should include converged programs in the same geographic area to enable nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive activities to complement and strengthen each other, and to have an adequate balance of nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive interventions.
- With both Partnership for Human Development (including Hamutuk) and TOMAK, there is opportunity for comprehensive nutrition-related sectoral coverage, and with the strong focus on gender inclusion across both programs, there is a unique opportunity to address all elements of a multi-sectoral approach.
- A more deliberate multi-sector approach in a defined geographic area, for example at municipal level should be considered. This approach is an opportunity to define expected nutritional status outcomes, and provide a basis to build capacity and ownership of successful approaches for eventual expansion into other locations.



# Summary Recommendations

The Review team made the following recommendations for DFAT's consideration:

**Recommendation 1:** Maintain a highly relevant nutrition program that meets an urgent priority in Timor-Leste.

**Recommendation 2:** Achieve nutrition outcomes by adopting a multi-sectoral program, with a geographic focus in a single municipality.

**Recommendation 3:** Focus on priority interventions as identified from the roundtable process to guide future interventions while drawing on the existing global evidence base of 'what works'.

**Recommendation 4:** Assess options for investing more in nutrition-specific interventions, including potential partnerships with agencies assisting Timor-Leste's Ministry of Health.

**Recommendation 5:** Provide support for the rollout of 'proven' approaches to municipalities in which KONSSANTIL have selected vulnerable sucos. The extent of support will depend on available resourcing and KONSSANTIL's progress, interest and capacity in the vulnerable suco initiative.

**Recommendation 6:** Consider including more specific nutritional status outcomes for converged nutrition investments, for example reduction in stunting rates, and systematically monitor and report on them.

**Recommendation 7:** After considering a converged program defined by a strategic framework, DFAT should consider the need for an Embassy-wide nutrition strategy and the extent to which DFAT can fund additional nutrition-related activities beyond PHD and TOMAK.

**Recommendation 8:** DFAT should focus on capacity development of KONSSANTIL:

- At sub-national level, focus on strengthening KONSSANTIL to effectively plan, implement and monitor a converged, multi-sectoral program in the selected convergence municipality.
- At national level, under GoTL leadership and in consultation with other stakeholders, DFAT should focus on the strengthening the capacity of national-level KONSSANTIL to undertake its mandate.





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