


Project Brief



Business Opportunities and Support Services (BOSS) Project

Objective	To contribute to employment creation and income generation based upon a systemic approach to enterprise development.
Key Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Institute of Business Support (IADE) under the tutelage of the Secretary of State for the Support and Promotion of the Private Sector
Duration	4 years September 2010 – September 2014
Geographical Coverage	National (Timor-Leste)
Country Programme Reference	More and better Business Development Services to improve micro and small enterprises in rural areas.
Donor	 Irish Aid Department of Foreign Affairs An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha
Budget	Euro 5,575,000
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Project Background

The Timor-Leste private sector is severely under-developed and many prevailing challenges and constraints prevent its sustainable growth and development. Against this backdrop, real need / market-oriented strategies and instruments have to be put in place and the main partners involved in the process of private sector development must operate in an integrated and coordinated manner.

The BOSS Project is supporting the Institute for Business Support (IADE) of the Secretary of State for the Promotion and Support of the Private Sector and other relevant stakeholders, to deliver need/market-oriented services to Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs) and contractors, develop value chains in selected sectors, promote better coordination and alignment of private sector initiatives and contribute to a “private-sector-sound” development

Project Strategies

The Project strategy is based on a systemic approach to enterprise development that addresses a range of needs and challenges of Timorese MSEs. In particular, the Project intends to tackle some of the main problems and constraints identified by the Timorese entrepreneurs: lack of dialogue and coordination between the public and the private sectors; lack of market access for products and services, ineffective utilization of local resources / opportunities, limited involvement of private sector in Government service delivery and weak managerial and entrepreneurial knowledge. Moreover, the Project will ensure that the needs of women entrepreneurs are better catered for and ensure a gender sensitive approach in private sector development.

The BOSS Project is a private sector development project incorporating institutional strengthening of its partners. It acts as a facilitator, focusing on technical assistance, coordination, networking, and information. During the four years of implementation, the BOSS Project supports IADE in boosting local economic development, enhancing Government service delivery and creating quality employment in rural areas by expanding market access for MSEs, strengthening local contractors and improving the provision of business development services.

The BOSS Project supports the Government of Timor-Leste in achieving key targets set as part of its Strategic Development Plan, which aims at establishing the private sector as the primary source of growth in incomes and employment in rural areas. The Project is well coordinated with all other private sector



development initiatives in Timor-Leste and cooperates with a range of partners and development organisations to foster synergies. The BOSS Projects integrates gender equality at all levels. Due to its embedded implementation methodology the Project enjoys a high degree of local ownership.

The Project focuses on sustainability and scale, which means striving for both systemic change and developing a clear vision of the future beyond the Project lifespan. The BOSS Project has a facilitative rather than an interventionist role. Acting as a “catalyst for change” encourages more players to take part in the market systems (i.e. crowding in), and lead to greater local ownership and more relevant and sustainable change and impact. Interventions facilitated by the Project aim to address the prior identified underlying causes of market underperformance.

The Project has three main components:

Objective 1: Increased business opportunities for MSEs in target sectors and districts

Objective 2: Nation-wide access to enhanced and innovative market / need orientated business development services

Objective 3: Increased SEAPRI commitment and capacity to mainstream gender in all policies, programs and activities

The Development Objective of the Project is to contribute directly to the generation of pro-poor economic development and quality employment for women and men and indirectly to peace consolidation and conflict prevention.

Activities and Achievements to Date

The BOSS Project has supported the process of restructuring IADE from a mostly business training provider to private sector development agency, which in addition to business development services provides services such as market research or acts as a facilitator for value chain development.

Component one of the Project focuses on developing value chains in three districts. The sectors/value chains selected are beef cattle, horticulture and tourism, which were assessed to have the greatest potential to generate jobs and income in the respective districts. The subsequent analysis of the value chains enhanced the understanding of the functions and players within the value chains and revealed a number of constraints that impedes the development of the sectors. The Project interventions address the identified critical weaknesses

to build the capacity within the system to enable key players to become more effective for the benefit of the sector as a whole. One year into the implementation, the Project has facilitated and supported the following:

- a public-private-partnership between the Government/owner of the national abattoir and a private company/operator of the abattoir
- the establishment of standards for the abattoir and training of butchers in modern and hygienic slaughtering and butchering techniques
- the private company to establish the first modern butcher shop in Dili and the marketing of its products
- the enhancement of skills of “Village Livestock Workers” to provide better treatment, vaccine and training to cattle farmers
- contract farming arrangement between a private start-up company and currently 50 horticulture farmers, this year expansion to new sights will include 200 more farmers. The company provides input supply, technical support and marketing services to the farmers

As a result of the interventions in the two sectors Dili, the capital, now for the first time has regular supply of hygienic local beef and fresh, organic vegetables. The Project has recently concluded analysis of the tourism sector and will shortly start interventions in the sector. In addition, the project adheres to the DCED standard for result measurement.

As far as the second immediate objective is concerned, the BOSS Project has strengthened IADE and its CDEs

(Business Development Centres) to act as the primary business development service provider in Timor-Leste. Significant efforts went into improving the skills of IADE’s trainers. New business management courses as well as sectoral adaptations (most notably an IYB adaptation for contractors and one for alternative energy products) have been developed and added to IADE’s range of courses offered. In January 2012 IADE has been accredited as a national training provider by INDMO (National Labour Force Development Institute), and currently two courses (IYB and the contractor course) are offered with certification as per INDMO’s national qualification framework. Furthermore the BOSS Project supported IADE in strengthening and increasing its business counselling services.

The Project designed a range of modern and highly relevant business development services in addition to training and counselling, which IADE now offers. IADE staff have been trained and supported in providing these services:

Tender Information System, which enables IADE to inform entrepreneurs by SMS about public tenders and other business opportunities. The Project negotiated cooperation between IADE and Timor Telecom allowing IADE to send SMS free of charge.

- Business Information provision
- Business Matchmaking services to link buyers and suppliers through personal meetings or events
- Business-to-Business Trade Fairs
- Business Plan Competitions
- Market assessment
- Value chain research



The BOSS Project has furthermore worked with IADE to design a public awareness campaign aimed at improving entrepreneurial mentality – the Super Trainer. This campaign including TV and radio spots as well as comics has to date had a positive reception and the movies won awards at international film festivals. Currently a Business Innovation Facility is being set up, which will provide tailor-

made support packages to entrepreneurs with innovative business ideas based on findings from market research conducted by IADE beforehand. These support packages can include a variety of business development services IADE offers as well as technical skills training or support in accessing finance if new technology needs to be purchased.

The BOSS project adopted since the beginning a gender mainstreaming approach in all its interventions. This includes supporting government and local counterpart to include gender concerns and promote gender equality through policies, programmes and regulations. In May 2011 BOSS supported the establishment of a dedicated unit, the Cabinet for Gender Equality (CGE), in the Ministry of Economy and Development. BOSS also facilitated the approval by the Parliament of a specific budget allocation (131,000 USD) for CGE which was used to conduct capacity building activities (e.g gender training), for local mission and research's purposes. IADE's trainers, districts coordinators and chief of departments have been trained in gender mainstreaming concepts and strategy and on gender sensitive value chain and are now able to apply this knowledge in their daily work, as demonstrated by pre and post training test showing increased gender knowledge among participants.

Given the new organisational structure of the V Government of Timor-Leste, the functions of the MED's Cabinet for Gender Equality have been transferred to SEAPRI and, in particular, to IADE. Considering the level of gender awareness already achieved in IADE through previous Project interventions, especially at management level, the Project decided to capitalize on the expertise already build in order to effectively



mainstreaming gender in all IADE departments and activities. Instead of having a specific gender unit, gender responsibilities have been integrated in the TOR of each directorate – as per the new IADE organic Law. The Strategic Plan of IADE and its Annual Action Plan have also been designed adopting a gender lens. The BOSS project also facilitated the establishment of the Gender Working Group at national and district level in MED and is currently supporting the same process in SEAPRI.

The project is currently facilitating the formulation and adoption of a National Strategy and Action Plan for Gender and Private Sector, whose final approval by SEAPRI is foreseen for July 2013. The main objective of this strategy is to enhance the collaboration among key stakeholders in Timor Leste for the development of a private sector which takes into account gender differences and concerns and responds to the needs of potential and existing women and men (micro, small and medium) entrepreneurs, at districts and at national level. It is hoped that the development of a gender and private sector strategy and of an action plan for its implementation will empower and bring positive changes in the working and social lives of Timorese women and men.

Gender concerns are mainstreamed in all the activities of previous components 1 and 2, from design of interventions to implementation and monitoring of them. On average, more than 30% of IADE beneficiaries are women: 56% of IADE business training and 30% of contractor training are women, 41% of the participants of business matchmaking events and 41.7% of the

exhibitor at the trade fair organised by IADE were women-managed companies/ institutions/ organisations. Furthermore, the first survey on women's farmers satisfaction in horticulture conducted in July 2012 showed 100% satisfaction with project's activities.

