



Local Governance Monthly Bulletin

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Local Government as the Key to Development

Council of Ministers Approves Law Proposals on Local Governance

On the 18th of February 2009, the Council of Ministers agreed to submit to submit law proposals on the establishment of local government to the National Parliament. The Council of Ministers will send a total of three law proposals on Administrative and Territorial Division, Local Government and Municipal Elections. "The Government is firmly committed to decentralization and establishing a local government system. If these law proposals are approved by the National Parliament, they will become the legal framework for realizing our constitutional mandate for power at the local level," said the Minister of State Administration and Territorial Management, Dr. Arcângelo Leite.

The proposed local government structure would establish Municipalities at the district level, maintaining the existing district boundaries. According to the law proposals submitted to National Parliament, municipalities would have two bodies: a municipal assembly and municipal administration. Initially, municipal funds will come from the central government, but the municipal budget is allocated by the municipal assembly and executed by the mayor, who is responsible for the municipal administration. Assembly members

and the mayor will be directly elected by voting held in each district.

After the approval of these law proposals, the Ministry of State Administration and Territorial Management (MSATM) will continue to work to prepare districts to become municipalities, said the National Director for Local Development and Territorial Management (DNDLOT) Miguel de Carvalho. "These draft laws that we submitted to Parliament were based on government policy, and perhaps Parliament has a different view. Next, we hope that Parliament will do community consultation and listen to opinions on the draft laws, even though the Government has already done this," said the Director. "MSATM will now begin to prepare subsidiary regulations, build facilities and structures for the municipalities, prepare strategies for developing the capacity of municipal civil servants, and look at the financial systems for the future municipalities. We must also begin to prepare for the municipal elections, but elections can only be held three months after the laws have been approved," said Director de Carvalho. DNDLOT will also work with all organizations that want to participate in the development process, to ensure all activities are coordinated.

District Assemblies hold First Meeting in 2009

The District Assemblies, part of the pilot Local Development Programme (LDP), held their first meetings between 3-12 February 2009 in eight districts. The objective of these meetings are to revise their investment plans to correspond to the annual allocation of funds for their district. Following the approval of their investment plans, the Assemblies will start the implementation process.

"The agenda of this first meeting was to revise the budget, including price changes in goods and the designs for the projects in the investment plans, and also to take a look at projects from 2008 that have not yet been completed," said Mr. Antonio A. Guterres, the Assistant District Administrator of Baucau.

Mr. Salomão da Cruz, an assembly member from the Bobonaro District said that, "The first meeting of the Assembly members is to review the proposals identified and submitted by the community, and decide which have the highest priority to be implemented with this budget."

To ensure transparency, Assembly members always disseminate information to the public through local media and posting information on notice boards. The information distributed includes the minutes of the meetings, the total budget for the assemblies, and the investment plans based on district priorities.

In the first meeting, the assembly members also held an internal election to select new members for the Planning and Implementation Committee and the Local Procurement Committee. They also decide

on which proposals will be approved at the district level and prepare their schedules for the planning process in 2010.

Assembly members show their commitment as community representatives in each district through their active participation in meetings, where they debate the needs of their communities and defend the proposals that the communities have submitted to them.



The Baucau District Assembly debates on the revision of the 2009 budget during their first meeting held on 3 February 2009.



2009 Local Development Program Budget

The Ministry of State Administration and Territorial Management officially announced on 2 February the allocation of funds for the Local Development Programme (LDP) for the eight participating districts in 2009. The LDP budget is allocated to finance local development activities. For this year, the Ministry has allocated a total of USD 1,826,000 for LDP, which is used to fund a pilot system of local governance that builds local infrastructure projects. The eight districts participating in LDP are Bobonaro, Lautem, Aileu, Manatuto, Ainaro, Baucau, Covalima and Manufahi.

Funds are allocated to the Local Assemblies, which are composed of Suco (village) council representatives in each district. Local Assemblies can use the funds for activities that will reduce poverty and benefit many people. Until now, through the LDP Assemblies have allocated funds to finance activities like building water posts, health clinics or schools, and other local development projects.

The Covalima District Development Officer, Mr. Francisco Guterres, said that Covalima has already implemented many projects through LDP with the funds they received in 2008, and they were ready to implement more projects with the 2009 funds. "We are pleased with the announcement of the LDP budget, because with this budget we can finance projects that the community proposes to the Assembly. With the experience that we gained from last year, we are also prepared to improve our work this year so that we are able to enact change in people's lives," said Mr. Guterres.

The LDP budget allocation is based on the population of each district, estimated by allocating \$3.50 per person. Based on this, the capital budget that MSATM allocated to each district is as follows:

District	Capital Investment (USD)
Bobonaro	289,000
Lautem	202,000
Aileu	130,000
Manatuto	135,000
Ainaro	187,000
Baucau	366,000
Covalima	196,000
Manufahi	155,000
Total	1,660,000

In addition, districts also receive a regular budget to fund activities such as meetings, verification, supervision and monitoring of projects during the planning and implementation phases. This budget is calculated as an additional 10% of the capital budget, so this year the regular budget is \$166,000, making the total LDP budget, including capital investment, \$1,826,000.



His Excellency Minister Arcangelo Leite announced the funds allocated to the Local Development Programme in 2009 in Manufahi on the 20 February 2009.

In Brief

In March:

- Technical Assistance Mission about Subsidiary Laws and Evaluation of the Future Functions of MSATM
- LDP: Refresher Training for Finances and Procurement
- LDP: Preparing tender documents for 2009 projects

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MSATM Minister Inaugurates Manufahi LDP Project

Vendors in the Same Market in Manufahi were presented with a new market building on Friday, February 20, during a ceremony attended by Minister of State Administration and Territorial Management Arcangelo Leite. The building was officially handed over to the Same Market Management Committee from the Manufahi District Assembly, which voted to build the new market as part of Manufahi's 2008 budget for the Local Development Programme.

"Our colleagues in Manufahi have once again shown to everyone, and especially the Government, that even with a small budget, they are capable of building a project that will benefit many people and is of good quality," said Dr. Leite.

The budget allocated to this project was a total of US\$9,200, and the market also was the site for two more projects: the building of a road-side gutter and the building of water systems for the market.

The market was identified as a priority for the district because there was not enough space for the

vendors. "We had no place [to sell things], so we would try to earn our living on side of the road. They built this new market because the old market was not wide enough," said local Same vendor Alcina da Costa.



Vendors in the Manufahi Market were happy with the new building that was realized because of the proposals that they had submitted to their local authorities.