



M&E House Quarterly Update

December 2017

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At M&E House *Buka Hatene*, we provide technical and advisory services to the Australian Embassy in Timor-Leste and implementing partners to collect and use credible information to improve Australia's development program.

Our team of independent specialists guide individuals and organisations to establish and use fit-for-purpose monitoring and evaluation systems. We strengthen skills, boost motivation, and build systems to interpret program information to enable improved decision making.

In our first quarterly update, we outline progress on Australia's Timor-Leste Performance Assessment Framework. We also explore the use of theories of change as a foundation for developing program performance management systems.

M&E House is a four-year investment funded by Australia's development program in Timor-Leste.

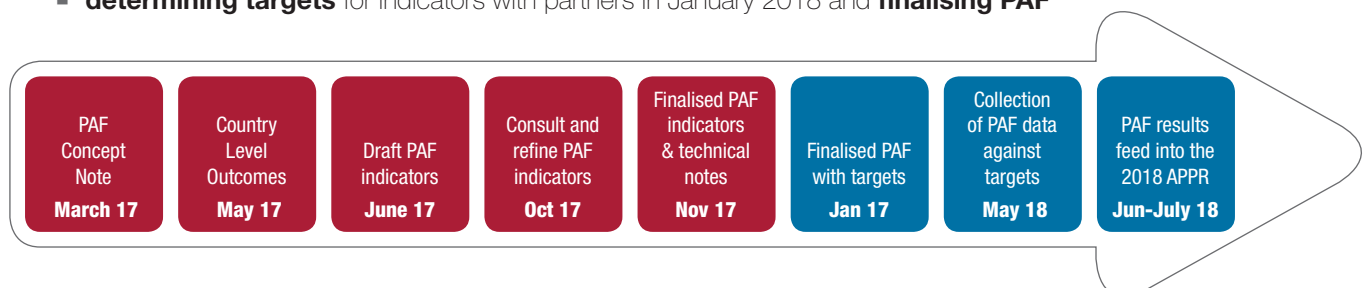
Measuring performance of Australia's development program in Timor-Leste

Our M&E House team have facilitated the Australian Embassy in Timor-Leste to develop a framework to collect and analyse thematic and country-level performance information, known as the Performance Assessment Framework, or simply, 'PAF'.

The PAF covers a two-year period from July 2017 to June 2019, after which it will be realigned to the new Aid Investment Plan for Timor-Leste from July 2019. The Australian Embassy is developing their PAF through a co-design process with relevant staff and managers, and together with implementing partners.

The key milestones in the PAF process include:

- determining **country level outcomes** with the Australian Embassy
- **mapping outcomes** with the Australian Embassy and implementing partners and **identifying indicators** to measure progress towards these outcomes
- consulting with the Australian Embassy and partners to **refine and finalise** PAF indicators
- **finalising** technical notes for each indicator
- **determining targets** for indicators with partners in January 2018 and **finalising PAF**



Pathways to change

What is a theory of change?

A theory of change is a visual tool that demonstrates how desired changes are expected to happen. Development practitioners use a theory of change to articulate the pathways required to achieve a program's goal; the "what needs to happen". Often referred to as the program logic, it shows the cause-and-effect relationship between program activities, outputs, intermediate outcomes, the end of program outcomes, and goals.

A well-thought-out and regularly revisited theory of change will shape the program and provide a basis

for developing a monitoring, evaluation, and learning framework. Through the program life, the theory may be amended as monitoring provides evidence of what is working, and what is not, to reflect any changes to the program.

Theories of change are also used as an evaluation tool to understand the intended pathways of change, to monitor what has occurred, and to critically assess which steps along the pathway worked and which did not.

A theory of change helps to:¹

- articulate and create a shared understanding of how change is intended
- provide an opportunity to refine and improve program strategies
- allow practitioners to identify potential enabling and disrupting factors, and to prepare for them
- provide an opportunity to test and agree the assumptions underlying programs
- clarify long-term goals while identifying short-term goals
- assist in identifying suitable program performance measures

“Hamutuk: mapping the road to change”

Over the past six months, M&E House has worked with a number of Australia's implementing partners in Timor-Leste to either develop or strengthen their monitoring and evaluation plans; the first step, developing and understanding their theory of change.

“A theory of change is a road map where a team agrees the key steps needed to reach their goal,” explained Myra Navarro-Mukii, specialist with M&E House.

Hamutuk, an initiative within the Australia Timor-Leste Partnership for Human Development (PHD), has recently developed the theory of change for their project in Holarua suco in Manufahi.

“Hamutuk is a pilot project taking a multi-sector approach to reduce stunting in children under the age of two years,” said Erkulanu de Sousa, technical lead nutrition for PHD. “There are several national and international NGOs already working in Holarua in the areas of family planning, maternal and child health, water and sanitation, gender, and disability,” he continued. “While these organisations work

across different sectors, their objectives are the same: to improve health and reduce malnutrition. Hamutuk's role is to facilitate a 'collective action' approach, by coordinating partners and working with them to measure progress towards outcomes.”

“As Hamutuk is new, we supported Hamutuk to articulate how they think the required changes will happen. We also worked with those partners to identify the enablers for, as well as the barriers to, change,” said Myra. “Our visual map of the intended change process aided Hamutuk to develop a realistic and fit-for-purpose monitoring, evaluation, and learning framework.”

With their theory of change, Hamutuk has developed clear indicators and performance questions that enable partners to measure and understand the impact of the collective action in Holarua. Erkulanu noted: “We believe that the evidence collected from the Hamutuk project will be vital for future nutrition-related activities in Timor-Leste.”

1 Drawn from Dana Cross, Associate Director, Grosvenor Management Consulting
<https://www.grosvenor.com.au/resources/articulating-how-your-program-works/>



Services provided from July to December 2017



Whole of aid program performance

Consulted with Australian Embassy and partners on PAF indicators.

Consulted and finalised indicators and technical notes for the Performance Assessment Framework.



Investment design

No design services provided during this period.



Monitoring and evaluation frameworks, systems and tools

Facilitated and provided technical advice to develop theories of change and formulated monitoring, evaluation, and learning plans for PHD, Workforce Development Program Timor-Leste, GfD and R4D-SP. Provided ongoing technical advice and facilitated the use of monitoring tools and user-focused progress reporting.

Assessed the potential of the individual deprivation measure as a population-level performance measurement tool.



Investment level learning and performance management

Developed methodology for learning dialogues and facilitated dialogues for GfD and Workforce Development Program



Reviews, evaluations and research

Planned and managed a strategic review of Australia's nutrition investments in Timor-Leste. Provided M&E expertise to the strategic review of PHD's health program. Scoped and developed Terms of Reference (TOR) for the strategic review of Workforce Development sector. Recruited team for the workforce development review to commence in January 2018. Provided technical support to DFAT and R4D-SP to develop TOR for the R4D mid-term review.



Capacity building and a community of practice

Facilitated community of practice events (most significant change, theories of change, narrative indicators) and provided training on the aid management cycle for Australian Embassy staff. Completed the final draft of the evaluation and capacity building strategy. Undertook a monitoring, evaluation and learning capacity needs assessment.



Information management

Developed a Management Information System (MIS) options paper and supported the Australian Embassy to identify MIS options.



M&E House

Conducted M&E House learning dialogue.

Monitored M&E House progress towards outcomes through partner workshops, surveys and other methods.

Our plan for January to March 2018

M&E House will:

- provide technical support to the Australian Embassy and partners to finalise targets for the PAF
- work with the Australian Embassy and partners on streamlined processes for data collection
- provide technical support to the Australian Embassy on the Aid Quality Check processes
- manage the Workforce Development Program review
- scope and develop TOR for a second Timor-Leste country strategic program review
- provide technical support and facilitate learning dialogues as requested
- provide technical support to partners on implementing their monitoring, evaluation and learning frameworks, with a focus on PHD in the first quarter of 2018
- as a member of the technical hub, provide continued support for Hamutuk with a focus on finalising and implementing their monitoring, evaluation and learning plan
- provide targeted capacity building and convene a monitoring, evaluation and learning community of practice forum
- engage a developer for Australia's MIS in Timor-Leste

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For more information please visit www.meh.tl



Hamutuk partners in Holarua suco, Manufahi



Australian Government

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade



M&E House is an Australian funded investment delivered in association with GHD International Development Group and evaluation specialists, Clear Horizon.

Clear Horizon