

Evaluation of Japanese Official Development Assistance (ODA) on  
Consolidation of Peace in Timor-Leste  
(Country-led Evaluation)

1. Theme: Evaluation of Japanese Official Development Assistance (ODA) on Consolidation of Peace in Timor-Leste
2. Country: Timor-Leste
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4. Period of Evaluation Survey: February 2009 to March 2009
5. Description of Evaluation (1) Objective The main purpose of this evaluation is to assess to what extent and under what circumstances, Japanese Official Development Assistance (ODA) to Timor-Leste has been relevant, efficient and effective in the peacebuilding process of the country. Japan has been engaged in assistance to Timor-Leste since 1999 in order to contribute to post-conflict peacebuilding with other members of the international community. By reviewing Japan's approaches and projects/activities implemented, the study intends to assess Japan's contribution to that end and make recommendations for future tasks from the lessons learned. (2) Scope The scope of the study is focused mainly on peacebuilding related projects/activities implemented by Japan's ODA. However, other factors such as Japan's involvements in political process and diplomatic interventions are also taken into consideration. In this evaluation, the research team exercised bibliographical surveys on post-evaluation reports and other related documents, as well as interviews with officials of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), the Embassy of Japan in Timor-Leste, and relevant offices/ministries of the Government of Timor-Leste such as the Aid Effectiveness Unit at the Ministry of Finance. (3) Methodology The evaluation study was conducted in line with the "ODA Evaluation Guidelines" set by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan. In order to conduct Priority Issue Evaluation, the study evaluated Japan's ODA policies from three dimensions, i.e. "policies", "processes" and "results". This study reviewed Japanese assistance to Timor-Leste which had been conducted during the peacebuilding process of the country from 1999 to date, by evaluating/assessing types and groups of projects/activities.

## 6. Evaluation Results

### (1) Relevance of “Policy”

The Japanese government holds “international peace cooperation” as one of basic principle of Japanese diplomacy. In recent years, Japan has been actively engaged in peacebuilding processes in its assistance to conflict affected countries and regions. Against such background, Timor-Leste was chosen as one of the countries to which Japan attempted full-fledged peacebuilding assistance not only with ODA but also by deploying its troops to UN Peace Keeping Operations and by actively participating in the political process. Japan’s policy to peacebuilding interventions in Timor-Leste proved to be fully aligned with the ODA Charter and the Medium-Term Policy on ODA which stipulate “peacebuilding” as one of the priority issues.

### (2) Evaluation of “Results”

As one of the major development partner of Timor-Leste, Japan’s massive humanitarian and reconstruction assistances from the early stage of nation-building since 1999 played an important role for Timor-Leste to become an independent nation after the post-conflict situation. On the other hand, however, the crisis which happened in 2006 brought out of fact that peacebuilding process is not an easy task and addressed the needs for a revamped approach to attain the consolidation of peace. After the crisis, such issues as public safety sector reform, improvement of governance, and countermeasures against poverty and unemployment are addressed as emerging agendas to deal with.

Most of the projects and activities implemented under the four pillars of priority areas that the Japanese government set for the assistance to Timor-Leste (“Human resource development”, “Infrastructure development and maintenance”, “Agriculture” and “Consolidation of peace”) have achieved satisfactory outcome. The study acknowledged that these outcomes contributed to the peacebuilding process of Timor-Leste.

### (3) Evaluation of “Processes”

Japan’s active engagement in the peacebuilding process of Timor-Leste since 1999 has been conducted in close partnership with the UN and international community at every aspect in political process and assistances, based on the needs and circumstances at that time. Such approaches of Japan have no doubt brought positive impact on the consolidation of peace and encouraged Timor-Leste’s efforts for nation-building.

During the process of transition of authority from the UN to Timor-Leste, Japan gradually shifted its resources input from multilateral to a bilateral channel. This shift brought lots of lessons for effective collaboration between multilateral and bilateral agencies in the peacebuilding operations. On the other hand, however, Japan’s bilateral

ODA assistance often showed slowness in decision making and service delivery vis-à-vis assistance through multilateral agencies.

On the side of Timor-Leste, weak capacity of government institutions/offices is still a big challenge. Japan's further engagement in human resource development needs to be enhanced in close collaboration with other development partners. Also, and follow-ups through technical assistance to the government counterparts who received equipments and facilities through grant assistance are very critical in order to ensure the optimal utilization of these equipment/facilities as designed.

With regard to the implementation process of Japanese ODA, although efforts for simplification of procedures, provision of indirect support and so forth are made on the Japanese side regardless of the capacity constraints on the Timorese side, there are some needs for further alignment and harmonisation between Timor-Leste and Japan in their implementation process and procedures.

## 7. Recommendations

Owing to the joint efforts of Timor-Leste and international community, Timor-Leste (TL) marked stable progress in peacebuilding and is reaching its final stage for consolidation of peace, in spite of the serious setback that happened in 2006. In fact, the majority of attention among the policy makers of the TL government and international community is shifting from the consolidation of peace after the post-conflict to full-fledged development of the country.

However, the base for peace and stability in this country is still fragile and, as we can learn from the lessons in the past, it is still too early to judge that the mission is completed. Japan as a country which is actively engaged in peacebuilding in the conflict affected countries/areas still holds an important role to complete peacebuilding process in Timor-Leste.

### (1) Revision of Priority Area

The current four areas of priorities still hold good rationale for Japan to continue, from a viewpoint of needs, division of labor with other development partners and its competency. However, in view of transition from the post-conflict to development phase, the area "Consolidation of Peace" should be dealt with as an overarching theme, rather than an independent pillar. For example, such issues like "poverty" or "unemployment of youth" which are often pointed out as potential threats to the stability should be dealt with as overarching issues that also fall under other areas of priorities.

Also, as pointed out in the previous section, capacity building of the government and society should be viewed as an important area of work for achieving sustainable peace and stability. In that regard, Japan's priority area for "human resource development" should be targeted not only on to the individuals but also on institutional building of the government and society.

(2) Enhancement of assistance process, selection of best approach/schemes of assistance

While acknowledging each country has its own assistance modality or process, it is desirable to work further toward the enhancement of aid effectiveness taking into account the recipient government's national strategy and capacity. In this connection, Japan's assistance to capacity development of government offices in charge of aid effectiveness is very important. Also accelerated approval and implementation processes of the General Grant Assistance Scheme and technical cooperation projects implemented by bilateral ODA are desired to improve responsiveness of Japanese ODA assistance in the context of peacebuilding.

Though Timor-Leste is one of the LDCs, the government is exercising active efforts to lead the economy out of its dependency on the foreign aid, by utilizing the Petroleum Fund which is accumulated from resource revenue from the Timor Sea. More specifically, the government is seeking sustainable use of the fund for industrial development and large-scale infrastructure development which should lead to the alleviation of poverty in the country. In this connection, the government is considering loan as an option for financing such attempts. Japan's ODA is limited only to grant aid and technical assistance so far, but it is desirable that the Timor-Leste government develops its institutions and capacity so that it would be possible to also consider loan-based projects in the near future for promoting sustainable development of the economy. In addition, measures such as facilitation of private investment to Timor-Leste are beneficial.

(3) Promotion of grass-roots level exchange between Timor-Leste and Japan

Japan's efforts in peacebuilding in conflict affected countries/areas are not widely known by the people in Japan. However, as Timor-Leste gains stability and peace, there is a chance for the Japanese public to know what the peacebuilding process is, and this promotes understanding on the importance of the issue among the general public. When bilateral ODA is implemented, such measures to bring more Japanese involvement by deploying Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCVs) and facilitating Japanese NGO activities in the country are desirable.

(Note: The opinions expressed in this summary do not necessarily reflect the views and positions of the Government of Japan or any other institutions)