



FINAL EVALUATION

Timor Leste

Thematic window
Children, Food Security and Nutrition

Programme Title:

Promoting Sustainable Food and Nutrition
Security in Timor Leste

Prologue

This final evaluation report has been coordinated by the MDG Achievement Fund joint programme in an effort to assess results at the completion point of the programme. As stipulated in the monitoring and evaluation strategy of the Fund, all 130 programmes, in 8 thematic windows, are required to commission and finance an independent final evaluation, in addition to the programme's mid-term evaluation.

Each final evaluation has been commissioned by the UN Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO) in the respective programme country. The MDG-F Secretariat has provided guidance and quality assurance to the country team in the evaluation process, including through the review of the TORs and the evaluation reports. All final evaluations are expected to be conducted in line with the OECD Development Assistant Committee (DAC) Evaluation Network "Quality Standards for Development Evaluation", and the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) "Standards for Evaluation in the UN System".

Final evaluations are summative in nature and seek to measure to what extent the joint programme has fully implemented its activities, delivered outputs and attained outcomes. They also generate substantive evidence-based knowledge on each of the MDG-F thematic windows by identifying best practices and lessons learned to be carried forward to other development interventions and policy-making at local, national, and global levels.

We thank the UN Resident Coordinator and their respective coordination office, as well as the joint programme team for their efforts in undertaking this final evaluation.

MDG-F Secretariat

The analysis and recommendations of this evaluation are those of the evaluator and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Joint Programme or MDG-F Secretariat.

Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund (MDG-F)

CHILD NUTRITION AND FOOD SECURITY THEMATIC WINDOW

JOINT PROGRAMME

***PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY
IN TIMOR-LESTE***

FINAL EVALUATION

FINAL REPORT

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Executive Summary

Basic facts about the Joint Programme.

The Joint Programme on *Promoting Sustainable Food and Nutrition Security in Timor-Leste* (from now on also referred to as “the Programme” or JP) was approved in 2009, the Programme Document (ProDoc) was signed in September and the funds for the first year of implementation were released on 13 November of the same year. The initial duration of the Programme was 36 months, until 13 November 2012, however, the Secretariat of the MDG-F approved a no cost extension until 31 March 2013.

The JP involves four different organizations of the United Nations: WHO, WFP, FAO and UNICEF who acts as the lead agency. The total budget is 4,030,000 USD of which 3.5 million USD is funded by the MDG-F and 530,000 USD by the Government of Timor-Leste. The main national counterparts of the Programme are the Ministry of Health (MoH), the Ministry of Education (MoE), the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MAF) and the Ministry of Commerce, Industry, and Environment (MCIE), formerly known as the Ministry of Tourism, Commerce, and Industry (MTCI).

The JP design has been articulated in a set of expected outcomes, outputs and activities that are meant to tackle the issue of malnutrition mainly from three different but complementary angles: i) nutrition and health services; ii) behavioral changes related to infant and young child feeding practices, and child care; iii) production and distribution of micronutrient rich food at community level and at school combined with nutrition education.

Background Purpose and Scope of the Evaluation

This final evaluation was conducted as part of the requirement of the MDG-F Secretariat M&E strategy. In this context, UNICEF commissioned the evaluation to an independent international consultant. It serves the purpose of institutional accountability on the quality of the JP design, the implementation process and the contribution to results. On the other hand, it also serves a purpose of institutional learning in trying to identify critical factors that can be distilled in terms of lessons learned for future programming. The basic unit of analysis of the evaluation is the Joint Programme in connection with: a) the country context; b) the MDG and the general objectives of the MDG-F thematic window; c) the UN reform process. The evaluation process included a desk review and a three week country mission to Timor-Leste, during which interviews and focus groups with stake holders at national and local level were conducted.

Summary of findings, conclusions lessons learned and recommendations.

There is wide consensus among the stakeholders consulted as well as documentary evidence suggesting that the Joint Programme capitalized on and added value to previous advocacy efforts of the UN system in Timor-Leste. In so doing it contributed to give greater visibility to the issues of food and nutrition security and to strategically place them in the Government agenda as part of the national development priorities.

The JP proved to be highly relevant and has been successful in demonstrating what can be effectively done to reduce food and nutrition insecurity along a set of integrated policy and strategy lines. Its integrated approach was well conceptualized but not equally well translated into operational planning and synergies on the ground, particularly as related to the interplay between food security and nutrition security. In this connection, the added value of the joint intervention could have been better exploited. These limitations are mainly due to design constraints as well as to challenges faced during the implementation. The evaluation also revealed that greater emphasis on technical cooperation by the UN organizations and greater investment by the national government are needed for sustainable food and nutrition security outcomes.

The conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations of the evaluation are presented below.

Conclusions

The conclusions of the report are structured below around the five evaluation criteria, namely: a) relevance; b) effectiveness; c) efficiency; d) ownership and e) sustainability.

Relevance

There is ample evidence showing that under-nutrition and food insecurity are key development challenges in Timor-Leste. In this context, the integrated approach presented in the ProDoc is highly relevant to the country's needs and aligned to the national priorities as laid out in the relevant policy and strategy documents. It is also in line with the MDG-F thematic window on food security and child nutrition as well as linked to the UNDAF.

Efficiency

Overall, the evaluation revealed that the Programme benefited from an efficient administration. Some minor issues have been detected in relation to the timely and complete delivery of the different types of nutrition supplies being distributed, and to timeliness in staff recruitment processes. Particularly as relates to hiring the first JP coordinator. This suggests that there might be some room for improvement in planning the procurement of goods and service.

Building consensus on strategies and approaches among the different stakeholders involved in the Programme is a time and energy consuming process and may affect timely and efficient decision-making. However, the eventual losses in efficiency can be compensated by significant gains in terms of coherence, synergy and effectiveness on the ground.

In connection with the above, it should be noted that the *modus operandi* of the JP was new to the parties involved and inevitably implied a learning curve. Moreover, the different reporting lines, formats and requirements, and the different levels of authority delegated to each Head of Agency are structural constraining factors for efficient joint action and go beyond the control of UN Country offices.

Effectiveness

The evaluation identified some positive emerging outcomes in each component of the JP. However, the potential added value of the joint intervention has not been fully deployed due to less than optimal operational internal synergy, particularly between nutrition security and food security related activities. Moreover, the latter was given a much lighter weight from an operational point of view, thus creating gaps in the practical application of the JP integrated approach.

As mentioned in the methodology section of this report, it is impossible to make a judgment on the impact of the JP on the nutritional status of the target population due to lack of data. By the same token, the enhanced coverage of, access to and demand for relevant health and nutrition services cannot be measured from a quantitative point of view. Based on the interview conducted, the coverage and access to health and nutrition services seems to be increasing. In this context, the Community Management of Acute Malnutrition Programme (CMAM) and the *Sistema Integrado de Saude Comunitaria*² (SiCa) as a decentralized service delivery mechanism, seem to be yielding positive results thanks to inputs from different UN organizations as well as national institutions. However, reaching out to the most remote communities remains a challenge. Moreover, inpatient and outpatient treatment and follow-up in the context of the CMAM could benefit from greater investment in and technical cooperation with the national health system. Particularly as relates to greater availability of equipment and human resources and to continued training and mentoring for staff professional development.

² Integrated Community Health System

The work being done with farmers' groups is also proving to be effective in contributing to increased food availability and income generation at the community level. The economic incentive brought about by the possibility of selling part of the harvest, which was not foreseen in the JP design, is proving to be a critical factor for the success of this initiative. On the other hand, the school gardens are having a demonstrative effect, but are facing challenges for their sustainability due to lack of incentives for greater engagement of the relevant local stakeholders. Moreover, the causal linkages between the demonstrative effect of school gardens and school access and completion rates proved to be unclear and overly ambitious relative to the time and resources allocated to the JP.

Finally, the Mother Support Groups (MSG) are proving to be an important entry point into the community and an effective multiplier to raise awareness and generate behavior changes related to exclusive breastfeeding, appropriate complementary feeding practices and child care. However, their potential effectiveness has been limited by the fact that activities aiming at increasing food availability have not been implemented in the same communities where they operate. Only towards the end of the Programme, in response to the recommendations of the mid term evaluation, efforts have been for better convergence of these two lines of activity, and this was limited to 50% of the MSG's supported.

Ownership

The JP was conceived in an immediate post crisis situation and, under these circumstances, its design was mainly led by the UN agencies. In this connection, ensuring ownership and leadership of national institutions can be looked at as a work in progress and something that progressively developed through out the implementation of the Programme. In fact, as already mentioned, the governance and management models proposed by the MDG-F implied a learning curve for all the parties involved.

As of today, there is documentary evidence of the Government's political commitment to address the issues of food and nutrition security in their multiple dimensions. The fact that the CMAM and the FSIWS have been up-scaled at national level under the leadership of national institutions is an indication of ownership, as well as the active engagement of the Ministry of Agriculture in supporting local food production.

On the other hand, although there has been a dramatic increase in the resources allocated to the Nutrition Department of the Ministry of Health, the overall budget allocation to the Ministries of Health and Agriculture is not significantly increasing relative to the overall Government budget³. By the same token, although the Ministry of Education is leading the implementation of the *School Feeding Programme* through a local food purchasing strategy, the funds allocated so far are less than one third of the total amount needed for full coverage: based on the data reported in may 2012 by the Inter-Ministerial Food and Nutrition Security Task Force, the current allocation to this Programme amounts to 8 million dollars, while the estimated need is almost 27 million.

Sustainability

The sustainability of the benefits being generated by the JP varies depending on the different components and type of interventions.

Home gardens and livestock breeding are likely to be sustainable thanks to the local capacities that are being developed and to the economic incentive represented by the prospects for income generation, from which farmers are already benefiting in different ways. However, the greater risk is the possibility of an abrupt interruption of the activities in support of local farmers before they get to a level of maturity that can ensure their technical sustainability. In this connection, the will and capacity of the Ministry of

³ Ref. Table 4 in this report.

Agriculture to fully take over in the technical assistance and to secure additional funds after the end of the JP will be critical.

The production of Timor Vita by Timor Global also has good potential for sustainability in as much as it combines private and public interests in the framework of corporate social responsibility. Nevertheless, some challenges relate to the need of increasing production and reducing costs of Timor Vita, which implies greater investment in the plant and increases in national production of raw material.

On the other hand, the sustainability of the School Gardens initiative is a question mark. Particularly because of the limited time and capacity of school teachers and children to take care of the gardens on a regular basis and due to the lack of strong incentives for schoolteachers and parents to seriously commit to this initiative.

Looking at the larger picture, a key challenge is the sustainability of nutritional outcomes that can be generated by the distribution of supplementary feeding. The latter implies efforts to progressively step out of the current dependency on humanitarian assistance interventions that constituted a substantial part of the Programme.

Lessons Learned

Based on the findings and conclusions of the evaluation, some lessons can be distilled in the following broad areas: a) Policy; b) Governance; c) Management and d) Resources.

Policy

Policies addressing behavior and health related factors are relevant for nutrition security in Timor-Leste. Similarly, humanitarian assistance in the form of supplementary and therapeutic food distribution will probably play an important role in the country for still some time. However, the findings of the evaluation also suggest that a greater emphasis on addressing structural factors, including income-generating activities at the local level, might need to be more directly addressed to generate sustainable nutrition outcomes.

The evaluation revealed the existence of different views within the UN Agencies and Government counterparts regarding the relative weight of the multiple factors influencing under nutrition. Some stress more behavior factors, others insist more on the direct linkages with food security and economic constraints. One of the global references in this debate is considered to be the document *Scaling up Nutrition, What Will it Cost?*⁴ (SUN) published by the World Bank in 2010. The SUN stresses three groups of interventions to be scaled up because they are considered to be the most effective in improving nutrition outcomes, namely: i) behavior change interventions; ii) micronutrient and de-worming interventions and iii) complementary and therapeutic feeding interventions.

The SUN exercise is focused on the 36 countries that carry 90 percent of the global burden of under nutrition and on an additional 32 countries with underweight or stunting greater than 20%, of which Timor-Leste is part. However, none of the countries included in the two lists are high-income countries. Actually, according to the latest WB classification⁵, 92% of the countries composing the first group (90 % of the global burden of under nutrition) are low or low-middle income countries. Similarly, low or low-middle income countries represent 75% of the second group (underweight or stunting greater than 20%).

⁴ *Scaling up Nutrition, What Will It Cost?* Susan Horton, Mera Shekar, Christine McDonald, Ajay Mahal and Jana Kristene Brooks, The World Bank, 2010

⁵ WB List of Economies, July 2012

These figures strongly suggest that per capita income does matter for long term and sustainable nutrition outcomes. Interestingly, this macro analysis is in line with the findings of the interviews with JP beneficiaries who coincide in considering economic constraints as a fundamental factor for limited access to food and for malnutrition.

In fact, while emphasizing the three groups of intervention mentioned above, the SUN explicitly says that *...many other indirect interventions can be implemented through other sectors, such as agriculture, education, and rural development, that will produce nutrition impacts, often referred to as the "longer routes" to improving nutrition*⁶.

In this connection, it is legitimate to argue that greater emphasis on these *longer routes* might ensure greater effectiveness and sustainability over the medium to long run and would help to step out of a dependency relation from humanitarian assistance, be this provided by international actors or by the national government.

In the context of the Joint Programme there are some practical examples of initiatives addressing multiple factors in a complementary way, although they are not yet consolidated and self-sustained processes.

Where Mother Support Groups and Farmers Groups are working together, they address behavior related as well as food availability and income related factors. They seem to be effective in combining greater local food production with income generation, greater awareness of appropriate nutrition practices and greater demand for health and nutrition services.

Another interesting example is the public private partnership for the production of *Timor Vita*. In this case, while addressing the urgent issue of supplementary feeding for children, the JP is also having a positive externality on the local economy by contributing to employment generation. In fact, while the production capacity of the plant at the moment covers only 30% of the total national target, this supplementary food it is being regularly distributed through the SISCa and the company that makes it is employing 40 workers. According to the interview conducted, from the perspective of Timor Global this is a *Corporate Social Responsibility* initiative, not a pure business proposition, but it is being profitable and seems to have good prospects due to wide acceptance of the product and growing demand.

It would be interesting to conduct more in depth studies on these specific initiatives once they get to a higher level of maturity and consolidation, so as to assess the actual impact on their target groups.

Governance

The evaluation revealed that the NSC and PMC can work effectively as a platform for political dialogue between the UN and the Government and for inter-institutional coordination among the different actors involved on both sides. However, the evaluation also revealed that the governance of the JP could have benefited from a more decentralized approach, in particular from establishing coordination mechanisms at the district level too. In fact, at this level, no mechanisms were put in place to ensure regular meetings between districts delegates of the relevant lines Ministries, UN counterparts and civil society actors. Such kind of mechanisms might be needed to better analyze risks and opportunities from an integrated territorial perspective, with more direct linkages to the operational activities on the ground. Ultimately, they could result in greater coordination and effectiveness of development cooperation interventions.

Management

Related to the above, another important lesson of this evaluation has to do with the approach to monitoring, as a key dimension of results based management. Monitoring of the JP was focused on budget delivery and on verifying accomplishments in the implementation of activities from an almost

⁶ SUN page XXI.

exclusively quantitative point of view. Although, reportedly some discussions were held, there is no written evidence of any qualitative analysis of the JP as a whole, cutting across its different components and sub-components and addressing issues of continued relevance, potential effectiveness and sustainability from a more systemic perspective. Such an approach to monitoring might be useful for accountability on the implementation of activities as planned, but it also suggests that the culture of compliance is still dominant in the UN agencies involved over a culture of analysis. The latter, while taking the original plans as a point of departure, needs to question the validity of the initial working hypothesis on a regular basis and implies a certain degree of flexibility to adapt the management of the programme accordingly.

This lesson might be taken into account at country and Head Quarters level, particularly as relates to striking a better balance between quantitative and qualitative information in reporting formats and requirements.

Resources

The findings of the evaluation clearly show that much greater resource allocation is needed to achieve sustainable food and nutrition outcomes. According to the Inter-ministerial Task Force on Food and Nutrition Security, the allocation of Government resources to the *National School Feeding Programme* needs to be tripled to achieve full coverage, going from 8 to 26.9 million dollars in order to guarantee the promised 30 cents per day per student for the 311,390 students currently enrolled. Similarly, greater public investments might be needed to enhance the productive capacity for Timor Vita. In fact, according to Timor Global Senior Executive, private international banks are unlikely to give credit to them, as Timor-Leste is considered a high-risk country for investment.

Finally, the equipment and staffing capacity of the Ministry of Health at national and local level needs to be increased to further enhance coverage and effectiveness of outpatient and in patient treatment of MAM and SAM cases. In this connection, more funds might also need to be allocated to training and refreshing courses to be conducted on a regular basis to ensure continued professional development of the staff.

Recommendations

In view of the findings and conclusions of this evaluation, the following is recommended to the UN development system operating in Timor-Leste:

- i) While continuing to address malnutrition from the point of view of humanitarian assistance, which is justified by the current country context, place greater emphasis on long-term technical cooperation and capacity development in the areas of: a) health; b) education; c) rural development and d) agriculture.

The latter are key priorities in the national development plan and highly related to food and nutrition security. In this context, a truly integrated approach with strong operational linkages should be ensured in the context of the UNDAF and related UN programming documents.

- ii) Continue to strengthen national leadership of development intervention and inter-institutional coordination on the Government and the UN side.

Although the MDG-F JP is coming to an end, it would be useful to maintain permanent platforms for information sharing and joint decision-making at political and managerial level, involving the relevant line Ministries as well as UN Agencies, Funds and Programmes. In this connection it would be good to ensure close coordination between the Food and Nutrition Security Task Force and the Nutrition Working Group. Similar coordination bodies could be created at the District level to enhance joint monitoring and operational coordination on the ground.

At the national political level, the UNDAF Steering Committee could assume the functions of the NSC.

- iii) To start immediately exploring additional sources of funding to ensure the continuity and consolidation of the processes set in motion or supported by the JP.

In this connection, it should be noted that while the supplementary and therapeutic feeding and behavioral change components of the JP are likely to benefit from significant additional resources being allocated by the European Union, no additional funding is envisaged at the moment to ensure the continuity and consolidation of the farmers groups currently supported by the JP.

- iv) Support the implementation of the local purchasing strategy of the School Feeding Programme by strengthening the productive capacity of farmers groups so that they can become local suppliers to the Government.

This could be an important dynamo for local economic development with positive outcomes in food and nutrition security and poverty reduction at large.

- v) In connection with the above, and in light of the need to prioritize the allocation of limited resources, it is recommended to reallocate to farmers groups any funds currently allocated to the School Gardens that have not been committed.

This might limit the risk of an abrupt interruption of one of the most effective and sustainable initiatives of the JP. School Gardens related activities might be resumed once new sufficient funding is secured

- vi) To further support the production of iodized salt so as to consolidate the entire production chain and ensure that sufficient quality standards are met for local producers to become providers for the iodized salt currently imported and distributed by WFP as part of its food basket items.

- vii) For similar programmes in the future, it is recommended to put more emphasis in analyzing gender related factors that influence nutritional status of the target population and to address them from an operational point of view during implementation.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. *Background, objectives and methodological approach*

The Millennium Development Goal Achievement Fund (MDG-F) was established through a cooperation agreement between the Government of Spain and the UNDP, signed in December 2006 for a total of 528 million EUROS. The MDG-F was originally structured in seven thematic windows, but in September 2008 an addendum to the agreement was signed for an additional 90 millions EUROS to include a thematic window on Child Nutrition and Food Security. 23 Joint Programmes were funded under this last window, including the JP Promoting Sustainable Food and Nutrition Security in Timor-Leste, which is the subject of this evaluation. Overall, the MDG-F funded 128 Joint Programmes across eight thematic windows and in 50 different countries.

The Joint Programmes are managed by the UN Country Teams, so as to enhance coherence and effectiveness of interventions of the United Nations Development System, which is one of the underlying objectives of the MDG-F as an innovative mechanism for multilateral development cooperation.

As part of the Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy of the MDG-F, a formative mid-term evaluation of the Food and Nutrition Security JP in Timor-Leste was conducted in the last quarter of 2011. In line with the M&E strategy of the Fund, the final evaluation was commissioned by the Lead Agency of the JP –UNICEF– and conducted by an independent consultant between July and October 2012.

As defined in its Terms of Reference, the objectives of the evaluation were the following:

1. *Measure to what extent the joint programme has contributed to solve the needs and problems identified in the design phase.*
2. *To measure joint programme's degree of implementation, efficiency and quality delivered on outputs and outcomes, against what was originally planned or subsequently officially revised.*
3. *Measure to what extent the joint programme has attained development results to the targeted population, beneficiaries, participants whether individuals, communities, institutions, etc.*
4. *To measure the joint programme contribution to the objectives set in their respective specific thematic windows as well as the overall MDG fund objectives at local and national level. (MDGs, Paris Declaration and Accra Principles and UN reform).*
5. *To identify and document substantive lessons learned and good practices on the specific topics of the thematic window, MDGs, Paris Declaration, Accra Principles and UN reform with the aim to support the sustainability of the joint programme or some of its components.*

The evaluation adopts a theory based approach and contribution analysis. In doing so, it uses a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods. Starting from a base of quantitative information, financial and substantive, qualitative data were collected to understand how and why the activities implemented and the outputs delivered contributed or not to the expected outcomes of the JP. The key issues to be addressed were identified in the initial desk review and structured in an analytical framework presented in the inception report. Other elements of analysis were identified and explored during the evaluation mission in the country. From this point of view, the mixed methods approach consisted also in combing a deductive approach, which starts from predefined analytical categories, with an inductive approach that leaves space for the

unforeseen. This is the reason why the consultation with stakeholders was done through semi-structured, open-ended interviews or focus groups, rather than closed questionnaires.

1.2 Purpose and Scope of the Evaluation

The final evaluation is summative in nature. As such, it serves the purpose of institutional accountability on the quality of the JP design, the implementation process and the contribution to results. On the other hand, it also serves a purpose of institutional learning in trying to identify lessons learned for future programming.

The basic unit of analysis of the evaluation is the Joint Programme, understood as the set of components, outcomes, outputs, activities and inputs that were detailed in the joint programme document and in associated modifications made during implementation. The Programme was analyzed in connection with: a) the country context; b) the MDG and the general objectives of the MDG-F thematic window; c) the UN reform process.

Along this line of reasoning, the unit of analysis was articulated in three dimensions: a) programme design; b) implementation process and c) contribution to development results.

The assessment is based on the criteria of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, ownership and sustainability. The contribution of the JP to development results was assessed in terms of increased and sustainable availability of food and nutrition supplies and of enhanced coverage, access and use of the relevant nutrition and health services supported by the programme. In doing so, the evaluation tried to establish plausible causal relations between the goods and services delivered by the Programme and the emerging development changes that could be identified. Moreover, it looked at wider contributions at the national policy level and at other emerging outcomes, including eventually, unintended consequences. Finally, the evaluation duly took into account contextual factors and other variables external to the JP that helps to explain the findings.

1.3. Methodology used in the evaluation

The evaluation Process

The evaluation process included three basic steps: i) Inception; ii) in country mission; iii) report writing.

i) Inception

This phase consisted in the initial desk review of relevant documents and in fine-tuning the design of the evaluation based on the objectives, scope and evaluation questions defined in the Terms of Reference. The output of this phase was an inception report that laid out an empirical basis of analysis and detailed the overall evaluation design, including the analytical framework, the methodological approach, and the methods to be used for data collection, synthesis and analysis. The inception report was reviewed and endorsed by the Evaluation Reference Group before proceeding to the next step.

ii) In country mission

The second step of the evaluation consisted of a three week mission to Timor-Leste (between 18 September to 9 October 2012). During the mission, the evaluator consulted all the relevant stakeholders at national level, including UN organization and national institutions. In addition, the mission included field visits in two of the four districts covered by the JP: Manatuto and Oecusse. During the field visits, the evaluator consulted selected groups of beneficiaries, District administrators and representatives of relevant line ministries at the district level.

The mission concluded with a debriefing in which the preliminary findings, conclusions and recommendations were presented and discussed with representatives of the participating UN organizations and national Government counterparts.

iii) Report writing

This was the final step of the evaluation. The data collected in the previous steps were analysed and synthesized in the final report structured along the lines indicated in the ToR. A draft report was submitted to the Evaluation Reference Group to receive feedback on the overall quality of the report and, in particular, on factual error or omissions, or major errors of interpretation that could affect the validity of the findings and conclusions. Based on this feedback, the report was finalized and resubmitted to the Evaluation Reference Group for follow up on the recommendations.

Data collection

Throughout the evaluation process, data were collected using a variety of methods, including: a) desk review; b) consultation with stakeholders; c) direct observation.

a) Desk review

The desk review mainly covered the following documents: policy, strategy and programming documents; progress reports and other monitoring tools; relevant previous evaluations or studies; selected projects outputs, such as publications or other thematic studies; minutes from NSC and PMC meetings, and any other document that was considered useful to make an informed judgement.

b) Consultation with Stakeholders

Consultation with stakeholders occurred mainly through in depth, semi structured interviews. In addition, the evaluator conducted focus groups with selected beneficiaries of the Programme, such as Mother Support Groups, Farmers Groups and Suco Councils. At the beginning of the in-country mission there was a plenary meeting of the PMC in which the evaluator facilitated a collective reflection on the evaluation process and its key focus area, so as to validate the lines of inquiry identified in the inception report.

c) Direct Observation

As already mentioned, during the evaluation mission the evaluator visited selected sites of programme implementation. Although in a relatively rapid fashion, the evaluator was able to observe the “field” in which the programme is being implemented, the geography of the territory, the transport and communication infrastructures and the interaction of relevant stakeholders’ groups, which provided additional inputs for the analysis.

Data Synthesis and validation

The data collected were organized in blocks of information corresponding to the three dimensions of analysis on which the evaluation is focused. In order to ensure the impartiality of the assessment, attention was paid to strike a balance between collective interviews, focus groups and individual interviews, to be able to cross analyze information from different sources and contexts. In doing so, the quantitative and qualitative data collected from different sources were triangulated at different stages in the interview process and in the final synthesis.

1.4. Constraints and limitations on the study conducted

The major constraints to the study conducted relate to data availability. The last official Demographic and Health Survey reporting data on nutritional status was conducted in 2010 and the next is due by 2013. This makes virtually impossible to assess the impact of the JP at this point in time. At a lower level of the results chain there is also significant lack of data: the quantity of food produced was not tracked, as well as the actual coverage of the services provided relative the total target population. In light of these limitations, quantitative data are discussed in this report whenever possible and meaningful for the assessment of the Programme, however, the substantive progress of the JP and its emerging outcomes could be assessed mainly through a qualitative analysis based on the review of available documents, in country consultation with relevant stakeholders and direct observation.

Finally, while the evaluation addresses the efficiency and effectiveness of the JP management model and its contribution to implementing the principles of the Paris Declaration and the UN reform process, it cannot do so in comparison to a single agency intervention as suggested in the ToR, in as much as there is no empirical basis for this comparison. The latter, would imply evaluating the JP on the one hand and, on the other, a similar programme, with a similar integrated and interdisciplinary approach but implemented by one single agency. Such kind of programme does not exist in Timor-Leste, so any comparison would be based on the subjective assumptions of the evaluator, and thus of limited validity.

1.5 Structure of the Report

As indicated in the terms of reference of the evaluation, the report is structured in two main parts: a descriptive part and an analytical one. The descriptive part, that includes the first two chapters, lays out the empirical basis for the analysis carried out in the second part. The evaluation conclusions are structured around the criteria used for the assessment, namely relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, ownership and sustainability. The lessons learned are structured around four key issues: policy, governance, management and resources. They are conceived as a stand-alone piece for wider dissemination. The report ends with a set of practical recommendations. Considering that the JP is coming to an end, the lessons learned and recommendations are addressed directly to the UN and, indirectly to the national Government and other potentially interested development partners.

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE DEVELOPMENT INTERVENTION CARRIED OUT

2.1. Basic facts about the Joint Programme

The JP *Promoting Sustainable Food and Nutrition Security in Timor-Leste* was approved in 2009, the Programme Document (ProDoc) was signed in September and the funds for the first year of

implementation were released on 13 November of the same year. The initial duration of the Programme was 36 months, until 13 November 2012, however, the Secretariat of the MDG-F approved a no cost extension until 31 March 2013.

The Programme Document (ProDoc) states the overall goal of the JP as follows:

...the overall goal of the Joint Programme is to strengthen institutional capacity and service delivery mechanisms to improve and manage the nutritional status of women of reproductive age and under-five children. The three outcomes of the Joint Programme will contribute to the national efforts already in place to achieve the MDGs 1, 4 and 5, Timor-Leste's National Priorities, and the Health Sector Strategic Plan (HSSP) goals. The programme will specifically contribute to attain the UNDAF 2009– 2013 outcomes 2 and 3, and the Thematic Window Terms of Reference outcome areas 1, 2 and 3 as address by MDG Funds for Children, Food Security and Nutrition. ...Key beneficiaries of the Joint Programme are pregnant and lactating women, adolescent girls and children under-five that are most vulnerable to food insecurity and malnutrition. Secondary beneficiaries are institutional stakeholders, including policy-makers, public servants, NGOs and service providers. (ProDoc Pag. 15)

In so doing, ...the JP aims to improve access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food, at all times, to meet dietary needs for an active and healthy life of women and children (ProDoc pag. 16)

The JP involves four different organizations of the United Nations: WHO, WFP, FAO and UNICEF who acts as the lead agency. The total budget is 4,030,000 USD of which 3.5 million USD is funded by the MDG-F and 530,000 USD by the Government of Timor-Leste. The budget funded by the MDG-F is distributed among the participating UN organizations as follows:

Agency	UNICEF	WFP	FAO	WHO	TOTAL
Budget Allocation	2,277,856	720,645	447,999	53,500	3,500,000

Source: PRODOC

The main national counterparts of the Programme are the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries and the Ministry of Commerce, Industry, and Environment (MCIE), formerly known as the Ministry of Tourism, Commerce, and Industry (MTCI). The Nutrition Department of the Ministry of Health and the Food Security Department of the Ministry of Agriculture are key players of the JP.

2.2. Management Arrangements

The United Nations and the Government of Timor-Leste jointly govern the Programme. However, the ProDoc clearly states that each UN organization *will assume complete programmatic and financial responsibility for the funds disbursed to it and will follow their respective organizations' regulations and decide on the execution process with partners and counterparts following the organizations' own regulations.*

In line with the guidelines of the MDG-F, the governance of the JP is structured in three bodies: the National Steering Committee (NSC), the Programme Management Committee (PMC) and the Programme Management Unit (PMU). These are described below.

➤ National Steering Committee

The main function of the NSC is to exercise policy and strategy oversight and be responsible for making necessary arrangements for assurance of successful functioning of the JP.

It was originally co-chaired by the Minister of Economy and Development and by the Acting Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Integrated Mission to Timor-Leste (UNMIT) and UN Resident Coordinator and attended by the Spanish Agency for Development Cooperation (AECID). This arrangement has changed during implementation, particularly after the political elections of June 2012. In fact, the new government of Timor-Leste no longer has a Ministry of Economic and Development; therefore, the NSC co-chairmanship will follow the decision of the Government which is still pending.

➤ Programme Management Committee

The PMC is the operational management body of the JP. It is co-chaired by the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries and UNICEF (on behalf of the UN Resident Coordinator) and attended by representatives of the UN agencies and Government counterparts participating in the JP.

➤ Programme Management Unit

The PMU works under the guidance of the PMC and in close coordination with the Nutrition Department of the Min. of Health, the Min. of Agriculture and Fisheries, and the participating UN agencies. It is responsible for the day-to-day management and administration of the JP. It also supports monitoring, reporting and evaluation activities. It is located in the UNICEF country office and works closely with an international programme manager and a national UNICEF staff.

2.3. Logic of intervention, budget allocation and description of activities carried out.

The situation analysis presented in the ProDoc, provides evidence that chronic food insecurity and malnutrition are widespread in Timor-Leste.

Table 2 presents the indicators for child and maternal underweight resulting from the 2010 demographic and household survey.

Table 2. Child and Maternal Underweight by Districts		
District	Child Underweight (%)	Maternal Underweight (%)
Aileu	41.2	20.8
<i>Ainaro</i>	47.7	21.0
Baucau	43.0	16.9
<i>Bobonaro</i>	52.2	39.4
<i>Covalima</i>	47.4	31.4
<i>Dili</i>	30.1	21.6
<i>Ermera</i>	58.0	31.3
<i>Lautem</i>	32.1	27.8
<i>Liquisa</i>	41.4	32.8
Manatuto	34.4	21.1
<i>Manufahi</i>	43.7	29.8
Oecusse	62.8	36.3
<i>Viqueque</i>	44.8	27.2

The ProDoc highlights behavioural and health related factors among the root causes of

malnutrition in Timor-Leste: *Poor knowledge on young child feeding practices including breastfeeding, high incidence of acute respiratory infection, malaria and diarrhoea, inadequate access to health and nutrition services and inappropriate child caring practices are the major contributing factors for the high rates of under-nutrition in Timor-Leste.*

At the same time, it emphasizes structural economic factors by stating that *Food insecurity is among the three major proximate determinant of children nutritional status...*, and by predicting that... *the nutrition situation of the vulnerable groups, particularly the children under-five years, pregnant and lactating women, is expected to deteriorate further with the increase in the price of food and the global economic crisis.*

According to the 2007 Second Participatory Assessment in Timor-Leste, shortage of food is considered the main indicator of poverty. About 20 percent of the population (some 213,000 persons) is food-insecure, and a further 23 percent (some 244,000 persons) is highly vulnerable to becoming food-insecure. The 2008 World Bank report on Poverty in a Young Nation noted that the percentage of population with per capita food consumption below the food poverty line increased from 31.2% nationally in 2001 to 42.1% in 2007. The Timor-Leste Survey of Living Standards (TLSLS) 2007 identified 72.9% of all households with "at least one month of low food consumption" showing that the number of months with low food consumption averaged 3.2 months during a year. Food shortages and household food insecurity are particularly severe during the country's 'lean' season, from October to March, particularly in upland areas. The typically food-insecure are subsistence farmers, female-headed households and households that are struck by sudden setbacks⁷.

Based on this analysis, the JP design has been articulated in a set of expected outcomes, outputs and activities that are meant to tackle the issue of malnutrition mainly from three different but complementary angles: i) nutrition and health services; ii) behavioral changes related to infant and young child feeding practices, and child care; iii) production of micronutrient rich food at community level and at school combined with nutrition education.

This logic of intervention was originally articulated in 3 expected outcomes and 7 expected outputs that constitute components and sub components of the JP. During implementation, the two outputs under outcome 2 were merged, so that the total number of outputs has been reduced to six. Table 3 illustrates the results framework with corresponding budget allocations.

Expected Outcome	Expected Output	Resource Allocation (in USD)	
		Original Budget	Revised Budget
Outcome 1: Improved health and nutritional status of pregnant and lactating women and	1.1 Strengthened health system's and local communities' capacities to increase availability of, access to and utilization of quality essential nutrition services at SISC posts, Health posts and Community health centres in four districts.	705,500	850,326

⁷ JP ProDoc page 8

<i>under-five children in 4 selected districts</i>	1.2 Increased demand for essential nutrition services by the families and communities, especially by the poor and vulnerable women and children in 4 districts.	717,937	590,979
	1.3 Increased production, availability and utilization of micronutrient-rich foods among women and children in 4 districts	1,413,041	1,394,985
Sub Total Outcome 1		2,836,478	2,836,289
Outcome 2: 20% more children access, and 25% more children complete compulsory quality basic education in 4 selected districts	2. Increased nutrition education in schools and communities through introduction of school gardens and consumption of nutritious foods, contributing to improved quality of meals provided by schools.	259,550	259,739
Sub Total Outcome 2		259,550	259,739
Outcome 3: Food security and nutrition surveillance system established and functioning at all sub-districts in 4 districts	3.1 Strengthen capacities of Central and District Team to utilize food security information and Early Warning Systems (FSIEWS) at national, district and community levels	135,000	135,000
	3.2 Improved capacity of District Food Security and Disaster Management Committees to plan and support mitigation and response initiatives.	40,000	40,000
Sub total outcome 3		175,000	175,000
GRAND TOTAL		3,271,028	3,271,028

Source: Progress Report June 2012

The assumption underlying output 1.3 was that the food produced would be entirely consumed by the target population. However, part of the production is being sold in the local market and is generating positive unintended consequences.

The assumptions underlying outcome 2 are not articulated in the ProDoc and in its results framework. In particular, there is no clarity on the supposed causal linkages between the introduction of school gardens and the increase in school access and completion rates by, respectively, 20 and 25 percent.

The activities related to the different outcomes and outputs of results framework are described below.

- **Outcome 1**

The great majority of the funds, 87% of the total programme budget, are allocated to outcome one. Within the latter, activities under output 1.1 focused on strengthening the national health system capacity to identify and address cases of Acute Malnutrition in a timely and effective manner. In particular, the JP supported the rolling out and up-scaling of the Community Management of Acute Malnutrition Programme (CMAM). The CMAM stretches from outreach at the community level to outpatient or inpatient treatment at health facilities for cases of Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM). Support to the CMAM consisted in training of volunteers of

SISCa⁸ Posts, staff of Health Posts and Community Health Centers, definition of guidelines and protocols for inpatient treatment, provision of supplies for health facilities, and procurement and distribution of Ready to Use Therapeutic Food (RUTF). While WHO and UNICEF provide the training and procure the relevant supplies, the Ministry of Health is responsible for the distribution of RUTF and the overall functioning of the CMAM. It is worth noting that during the implementation of the JP the CMAM has been expanded so as to cover the entire country.

Activities under Output 1.2 focused on inducing behavioural changes at the household level. This line of intervention basically consisted in establishing or supporting already existing *Mother Support Groups* (MSG). Members of the MSG received training on Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) practices, with emphasis on exclusive breast-feeding during the first six months and appropriate complementary feeding for children 6-23 months. The work also focused on raising awareness on early signs of malnutrition and on the need to seek professional help through the official health system in a timely manner. By this token, MSG can act as multiplier of the training received by providing counselling to other mothers in their community. This initiative is implemented in partnership with *Alola Foundation*, a national NGO that has a long and well-established trajectory on this type of work.

Activities under output 1.3 mostly focused on procurement and distribution of supplementary feeding to address cases of Moderate Acute Malnutrition (MAM). In particular this consisted in piloting the production of a fortified blended food called *Timor Vita*, through a public private partnership between the Ministry of Health and a private company called *Timor Global*. This initiative was launched with financial support from the Government of Timor-Leste to install the production plant and technical assistance from WFP. Other donors, such AusAID also came in to play with additional support. The MDG-F JP built on this initiative by providing training and procuring a generator to stabilize the production. In 2012, the Government of Timor-Leste allocated 2 million dollars to the Nutrition Department of the Ministry of Health that are entirely dedicated to this initiative. 1.7 million is being used to purchase the product and the remaining funds are transferred to WFP to cover the distribution costs. Currently, the production of *Timor Vita* covers 30% of the estimated needs of the target population, i.e. children between two and five years. Incidentally, it should be noted that the production plant of *Timor Vita* is employing 40 workers, the latter resulting in a positive externality of the public private partnership supported by the JP.

The limited coverage in the distribution of *Timor Vita*, is complemented with the distribution of corn soya blended powder (CSB) which is imported and distributed by WFP. Distribution of supplementary feeding is done through the national health facilities at district and community level, in the context of the SISCa. Finally, the JP supported the piloting of *multiple Micro-Nutrient Powder* (MNP) targeting children between 6 and 23 month. MNP is being procured by UNICEF and is being distributed by the Ministry of Health in the district of Alieu as part of the pilot initiative. Along the line of supplementary feeding, the JP is also supporting the distribution of Vitamin A to children between 6 and 59 months across the four districts. The other stream of activities under this output supported local production of iodized salt by small production units at the farmer level. It consisted of training and provision of tools to already existing informal production units in two districts that are not part of the four districts selected as the

⁸ Portuguese acronym for Sistema Integrado de Saude Comunitaria: SISC

geographical focus of the JP. This initiative was carried out in partnership with the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Environment.

Finally, activities under output 1.3 also focused on the production of micronutrient rich food. This has been done through training, technical assistance and the provision of production supplies (seeds and basic farming tools) for the establishment of vegetable gardens, small-scale livestock and aquaculture at household or community level. This initiative is carried out in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, providing technical assistance through its “*extensionist*” workers. The *extensionists* are local delegates of the MAF at the Village level. The households involved in this initiative are basically those that were already targeted by FAO prior to the JP: mainly upland communities that are most prone to food insecurity due to their relatively isolated location, to the type of soil and to climatic factors.

- **Outcome 2**

Outcome 2 constitutes 8% of the total JP budget. Activities under this component included training, technical assistance and provision of farming tool for the establishment of school gardens. This was proposed and carried out as an extra curricular activity with the direct involvement of teachers, parents and children. The selection of schools to be involved in this initiative was based on three criteria: i) availability of land; ii) availability of a water source within a manageable distance and iii) the level of commitment demonstrated by the actors to be involved during the identification phase. In addition to supporting the establishment of school gardens, the JP provided training on food safety and good nutritional practices. After full handover of the school feeding programme to the government, originally planned output 2.1 and activity 2.1.1 have been excluded from the joint programme.

- **Outcome 3**

Outcome 3 constitutes 5% of the total programme budget. This component focused on establishing a Food Security Information and Early Warning System (FSIEWS) at district and sub-district level to regularly produce information that can be used for evidence based decision making by relevant authorities. Activities under this component mainly consisted of defining a methodology for data collection and reporting formats and in training local staff of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, as well as facilitating or convening meetings.

Annex 1 presents the latest monitoring framework available, dated 30 May 2012, providing detailed quantitative data on activities and outputs. As mentioned in the methodology section, these data are of limited utility to assess relevance, effectiveness and sustainability. The substantive analysis of the JP and its assessment according the evaluation criteria is presented in the following sections of this report.

3. LEVELS OF ANALYSIS: ASSESSMENT OF THE JOINT PROGRAMME

This section starts by analyzing substantive progress towards expected outputs and outcomes as well as some unintended consequences that were identified in the evaluation process. This will give a concrete horizon for the analysis the JP design and implementation process. In doing so, the most critical factors, internal and external to the JP, are highlighted.

3.1. Contribution to results

In an effort to capture the added value and the challenges related to the inter-sectoral approach of the JP, the presentation of the findings is structured around key results areas that go beyond the formal structure of the results framework to build on the three strategic lines of intervention of the JP. In addition, the evaluation identified other emerging outcomes that were not explicit in the ProDoc. In light of these considerations, the key results areas presented below are the following: i) strategic positioning, policy and strategy development; ii) enhanced coverage and access to health and nutrition services in the four selected districts; iii) enhanced food security in the four selected districts, including availability of iodized salt iv) behavioral changes at the household and community level in the four selected districts; v) Gender mainstreaming and inequality.

i) Strategic positioning, policy and strategy development.

There is wide consensus among the stakeholders consulted as well as documentary evidence suggesting that the Joint Programme capitalized on and added value to previous advocacy efforts of the UN system in Timor-Leste. In doing so, it contributed to give greater visibility to the issues of food and nutrition security and to strategically place them in the Government agenda as part of the national development priorities.

After the crisis of 2006, the Government's attention was placed on ending violence and restoring peace. In this context, the United Nations, while supporting the Government in humanitarian assistance and peacekeeping started to advocate for placing greater emphasis on long-term development objectives, including the Millennium Development Goals. In 2009, the attention started to shift from peacekeeping to development. This coincided with national efforts to draft the first *Strategic National Development Plan* whereby the key slogan is: *Good-bye conflict, welcome development.*

Another milestone in this shifting of focus were the results of the Demographic and Household Survey (DHS) conducted with technical and financial assistance of several development partners, including organizations of the UN development system. The DHS results provided solid evidence of the country situation regarding the issue of malnutrition that unequivocally stood up as one of the key challenges to address for the country's long-term human development process.

In this context, the JP was designed proposing an inter-sectoral approach. One of its concrete results in terms of advocacy was the Comoro Declaration signed in October 2010 by seven line Ministers, namely the Ministers of: Agriculture and Fisheries, Finance, Health, Education, Tourism Trade and Industry, Economic Development and Social Solidarity. The Comoro Declaration represents the first official recognition of the issues of food security and malnutrition as important national priorities and a commitment to address them from an integrated approach. This declaration was strongly supported and facilitated by the UN Agencies participating in the Joint Programmes, who co-signed it as witnesses.

Another contribution of the JP is the technical support provided to revise the *National Nutrition Strategy*, taking into account the current situation and the linkages with food security, thus aiming to strengthen the direction of development in the nutrition sector.

The interviews with national institutions confirmed the political commitment of national counterparts. However, although in absolute numbers there was an increase of resources allocated to the Ministries that are more directly linked to food security and nutrition, their

relative weight in the Government budget remains stable. The allocation to the Ministry of Health increased by less than 1% from 2011 to 2012 and is projected to be stable until 2015. Similarly, the allocations to the Ministry of Agriculture and Fishery reflect 2% of the total Government budget throughout the period observed. Table 5 presents the details.

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
	\$US,000 (%)	\$US,000 (%)	\$US,000 (%)	\$US,000 (%)	\$US,000 (%)
Government	681,712 (100%)	671,240 (100%)	694,233 (100%)	718,158 (100%)	743,035 (100%)
Ministry of Health	38,198 (5.6%)	40,909 (6.1%)	42,480 (6.2%)	44,126 (6.2%)	45,831 (6.2%)
Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries	13,409 (2%)	13,924 (2%)	14,461 (2%)	15,018 (2%)	15,598 (2%)

Source: Budget Book FY 2011, Book no. 4A & 4B, Budget Department at Ministry of Finance. Note: This is a normal budget out of a special fund.

Although the overall allocation of resources to the Ministry of Health is not increasing significantly, it should be noted that the allocation to its Nutrition Department dramatically increased over the last three years, Jumping from 3,000 (three thousand) dollars in 2010 to 2 million in 2012.

Another indication of greater national commitment to food security and child nutrition are the ongoing efforts to implement the national *School Feeding Programme*. In this connection, the Government of Timor-Leste laid out a strategy where by it transfers to all public schools 30 cents US per student per day, so that food for school meals can be purchased from local farmers. This strategy may lead to positive outcomes in terms of child nutrition and as a dynamo of local economy. However, according to the data provided in a report of the Inter-Ministerial Food and Nutrition Security Task Force, although *the local purchase strategy is already in the implementation stage, meeting the desired outcome and impact is challenged by the low allocation of fund. At the moment, the Ministry of Education allocated US\$ 8,000,000. Based on the 30 cents/day/child, this programme needs US\$ 26,904,096 for the whole year to purchase food for the currently enrolled 311,390 students.*⁹

ii) Enhanced coverage and access to nutrition and health services in the four selected districts

The available evidence suggests that the coverage and access to health and nutrition services in the districts covered by the JP is increasing. In this context, the CMAM as a programme and SISCa, as a service delivery mechanism seem to be yielding positive results. Although there are no reliable official data showing the trend in the number of SAM and MAM cases, the health staff consulted in Manatuto and Oecusse reported that SAM cases significantly decreased over the last two years. This fact suggests that the national efforts in place to decentralize the health system are some how being effective. In particular, the SISCa days are proving to be an effective

⁹ Quarter I 2012 Situation Assessment Report, page 6.

outreaching strategy for early detection and quick referral. They regularly take place on a monthly basis in a strategic location that can gather people from different villages and communities, according to a schedule defined by the Ministry of Health. In these occasions, an integrated set of health and nutrition services is offered, ranging from vaccination, distribution of supplementary feeding and vitamin A plus deworming, to training, counseling and monitoring the nutritional and health status of the target population. The CMAM seems to be working too offering outpatient and inpatient treatment and follow-up.

In this framework, full coverage and access to the services remains a challenge due to several factors. The geographical dispersion of the rural population of Timor-Leste and the limited availability of transport and communication infrastructure are major challenges, particularly considering that the isolation of some of the rural communities is particularly aggravated during the rainy season. Under these circumstances, not all the target population is always able to reach the designated place for the SISCa day.

Another factor mentioned by interviewees relates to the scheduling of the SISCa days. Although they are meant to take place according to a fixed schedule, as a matter of fact the exact date and location may change at the last minute, thus making it difficult to regularly offer the relevant services in the right place at the right time. This is particularly the case for distribution of supplementary feeding, which implies greater logistical preparation for transportation and delivery. On the other hand, also some problems in stock availability of supplementary feeding have been reported. Not all the ingredients that compose the food baskets to be distributed are always available when needed. This suggests internal challenges to the JP, related to a less than optimal efficiency in planning the procurement and distribution of supplies.

The effectiveness of supplementary feeding to increase the nutritional status of the target population is being partially limited by the food insecurity to which the rural population is exposed. Reportedly, the food distributed is not exclusively consumed by children under five years and pregnant women, but is shared among the entire family. Inevitably, by sharing it among the family, the intake of fortified blended food per child and pregnant women is lower than expected. In fact, it has been noted that the most powerful attraction for villagers to attend the SISCa day is often the awareness that food will be distributed.

Another challenge identified relates to the operational capacity of the national health system for the optimal implementation of the CMAM. The quantity and quality of the staff working in health facilities at district and sub-district level is considered less than optimal. The CMAM, particularly at community level is partly relying on the voluntary or quasi-voluntary work of people that do not have the necessary qualification and experience for optimal performance. In this connection, Timor-Leste has engaged in a south-south cooperation programme with Cuba. The latter is providing technical assistance by sending medical doctors supporting the national health system's capacity development. In so doing, they are also training local staff that should be taking over once they redraw.

In addition to staff shortage and relatively limited capacity, the health facilities do not count on sufficient and well functioning equipment. Community Health Centers do not have enough beds and up to date technology to treat severe cases, these need to be referred to the only existing National Hospital, for districts close to Dili, or to one of the five Regional Hospitals for more remote districts. The scales used to weight children are sometimes not calibrated and handled

with adequate care and this is one of the challenges being faced to collect reliable data.

These challenges have to do with the amount of resources allocated to the Ministry of Health and to a larger challenge that the country is facing in developing human capital in health as well as in other sectors. However, there are also other factors, internal to the JP, that play a role. In particular, while it delivered equipment and training to the health facilities, the JP did not closely monitor on the ground the appropriate use of the equipment delivered and did little follow-up on the training.

iii) Enhanced food security in the four selected districts, including availability of iodized salt.

The food security component of the JP materialized in three main lines of interventions: a) support to home gardens and livestock production; b) support to the production of iodized salt and c) piloting of a Food Security Information and Early Warning System.

Supporting home gardens and livestock production is proven to be an effective and sustainable initiative for food security. The evaluation found that they are contributing to greater food availability and income generation at community level. The latter is an unintended consequence, as the initial assumption was that the food produced would be consumed rather than sold. Although not responding to the initial design, income generation seems to be a positive externality that is indirectly feeding into the overall goal of the JP. Based on the interviews conducted with farmers groups and with *Alola* Foundation, this additional income is being mostly used to buy eggs, cassava, coffee, salt, oil, soap, or other primary necessities. Several interviewees also mentioned buying clothes, books or pens for the children. There is no way to verify whether this is the real destination of the income generated from the activity. Arguably, in a situation of poverty or extreme poverty, such as that of the rural communities of Timor-Leste, the fact that the JP is contributing to income generation is per se a positive externality. In this connection, it is also important to note that the prospects for income generation, in addition to food availability at the household level, is proving to be an effective economic incentive for the consolidation and sustainability of home gardens.

Interestingly, when asked why they would buy mainly traditional local food such as cassava, rather than other more micronutrient-rich food, the answer received by the beneficiaries consulted was the same and very straight forward: *because it is the cheapest food available on the market and we can buy more with the same amount of money*. This seems to confirm that, as stated in the situation analysis of the JP, economic constraints are an important critical factor for food and nutrition insecurity among the targeted population.

Reportedly, there are different levels of progress in this initiative depending, among other factors, on the intensity of the technical assistance received by the farmers groups. The MAF has 420 *extensionists* out in 422 villages. But the issue is that not all of them actually reside in the village that they are supposed to assist, and this is making a difference in the continuity and intensity of the assistance and therefore, in the results being achieved.

Another factor to be considered is that there is no established tradition of horticulture, particularly in the upland communities, so that the mastering of the appropriate technique is a gradual process. Moreover, the ownership and the commitment of the farmers' groups are also determined by their perception of utility and profitability of the initiative. In this connection, the operational linkages with the training and counseling work of the Mother Support Groups,

particularly as relates to advocating for the importance of consuming micronutrient rich vegetables, may acquire even more weight.

While conceptually related and highly relevant, the production of iodized salt is partly delinked from the rest of the Programme from an operational point of view. In fact, it is being supported in two districts that are not part of the four selected as focus area: Liquica and Bobonaro. In these two districts salt production is a long lasting family tradition. This justifies why the JP choose them as focus area. However, no distribution mechanisms were put in place so as to link them to the other geographical and thematic areas of the JP. The paradox is that the JP is supporting national production of iodized salt while distributing imported iodized salt in the four selected districts. The possibility of combining these two lines was never addressed. Besides the distribution issue, there are issues related to quality control and to availability of sufficient equipment and supplies to strengthen the production chain and stabilize production levels. UNICEF has recently commissioned a needs assessment on the production of iodized salt, and this is expected to shed light on the specific technical issues to be addressed. The report of this study is not yet available.

Finally, the Food Security Information and Early Warning System (FSIEWS) is operating as a tool for timely evidence based decision-making and is producing regular reports. In 2011 the MAF decided to expand this pilot initiative to the entire country, which is a clear indication of ownership and commitment. This System is being scaled up at national level with additional funding of 1.3 million EURO, 80% of which from the EU and the remaining 20% from FAO core funding of the Technical Cooperation Programme in Timor-Leste.

iv) Behavioral changes at the household and community level in the four selected districts

According to the stakeholders interviewed at district, village and community level, parallel to the enhanced coverage, there is an increased demand for health and nutrition services. This is explained by behavioral changes that seem to be taking place at the household level. In particular, there seem to be greater awareness on the importance of exclusive breastfeeding during the first six months of a child's life, on the importance of appropriate complementary feeding and on the need to seek professional help whenever signs of malnutrition and or other health complications are presented. In this connection, the work being done with the Mother Support Groups and their role in training and counseling at the community level is an important contribution of the JP.

Mother Support Groups are receiving training on infant and young child feeding practices as well as cooking demonstrations. However, the effectiveness of such activities seems to be limited by shortage of food and economic constraints at community level. The focus groups discussions held with Mother Support Groups during the field visits revealed that while in the training they are taught how to cook micronutrient rich food, including different kinds of vegetables, meat or fish, for most people this food is not affordable on a regular basis. In fact, the linkages between activities aiming at inducing behavioral changes in feeding practices and activities aiming at reducing food insecurity at community and household level could have been better operationalized in the context of the JP. Only during the last semester, as of March 2012, concrete efforts were made to converge the work of mother support groups with food production at community level. This was done in response to the recommendations of the Mid Term Evaluation. As of today, only 50% of the MSG supported by the JP is working together with

the farmers groups.

School gardens too seem to be having a positive demonstrative effect for children and potentially their families, to be more aware of appropriate nutrition practices. However, the evaluation also revealed challenges related to their sustainability and to their potential effectiveness in contributing to enhanced school access and completion rates as assumed in the results framework of the JP. To impact on school access and completion rates the school garden should be more than a demonstrative initiative. There are no data on the actual quantity of food produced relative to the estimated needs. However, all the stakeholders interviewed coincide in that the amount of food that can be produced in the school gardens, even at their maximum potential, by no means can constitute a regular and sufficient supply for school feeding. In this connection none of the interviewees, nor the available documents clearly explain how school gardens could impact on access and completion rates. Moreover, while the home garden visited during the in country mission were flourishing and very well maintained, the school gardens were almost abandoned, although the two initiatives received exactly the same inputs - seeds, farming tools, training and technical assistance – and there are no significant differences in the availability of water for irrigation.

One factor that can explain this difference is the timing of the evaluation field visits. The latter took place towards the end of September, so just after a month break in the school calendar - August- during which no one takes care of the gardens. Arguably, in another time of the year they could be in better shape.

Another factor is the economic incentive. While in the case of the home gardens and livestock production the prospect for income generation is proving to be a strong incentive for the consolidation and sustainability of the initiative, such incentive does not exist in the case of the school gardens.

The amount of labor put into this activity and the capacity of the actors involved is also important. Horticulture is a labor-intensive activity; however, while the farmers' groups assume it as one of their main occupations and are ready to put significant efforts in it, the school gardens are an extracurricular activity carried out by non-professional farmers, mostly children and teachers, or sometimes parents. The schoolteachers interviewed clearly perceive this initiative as an extra burden that adds to their normal duty and for the children it cannot be assumed as a primary occupation nor can they be given the responsibility.

v) Gender mainstreaming and inequality.

Some work has been done in the context of the Mother Support Groups who are trying to involve men too in their activities. However, the issues of gender mainstreaming and inequality were not explicitly mentioned in the intervention strategy laid out in the ProDoc and there is no evidence of any significant efforts made during the implementation to address them from an operational point of view. Moreover, as also confirmed by the findings of the final evaluation of the MDG-F Gender JP on in Timor-Leste, there is no evidence of major coordination to complement the two programmes.

3.2. Analysis of programme design

i) Design process and analysis of the JP approach

The JP design built on preexisting lines of interventions of different UN organizations and on ongoing national efforts. The fact of building on preexisting initiatives enabled to ensure continuity of previous development interventions in the country, but arguably it also implied challenges to translate the integrated approach proposed by the ProDoc into actual synergies on the ground and, therefore, it influenced the potential for optimal effectiveness of the Programme.

In fact, the division of labor among the UN agencies clearly responds to their comparative advantage, but their involvement in each of the JP components and sub-components was based on the well established paths of each organization with their respective national and local partners. In doing so, it did not respond to a jointly developed operational strategy that could result in better convergence in terms of specific geographical areas to be covered within each districts and people to work with, or in greater synergy across the different geographic and thematic areas. Concrete examples support these findings. The most significant one include the gaps between activities with mother support groups and with farmers' groups, or between the production and distribution of iodized salt. Although highly interconnected, these activities were planned along parallel lines.

Based on the interviews conducted during the evaluation mission, and on the preliminary findings of the Country Case Study commissioned by the MDG-F Secretariat, the design process was driven by the UN agencies without extensive consultation at national and local level, implying a steeper curve to ensure national ownership and leadership in the implementation process. This is some how justified by the immediate post crisis situation in which the Programme was designed. When the request for programme proposals was launched by the MDG-F secretariat, Timor-Leste was just coming out of the 2006 political crisis, the focus of the Government was rightly placed on restoring peace and it was a time of reorganization of State institutions. This required quick action and was not the most conducive environment for a wide participatory process. However, the Government was involved in analyzing and endorsing the Joint Programme Document.

Although the situation analysis presented in the ProDoc explicitly refers to food security and economic related factors among the key determinant for under-nutrition in Timor-Leste, the only stream of activities exclusively focusing on food production -farmers groups- was allocated approximately 4% of the total budget. It is difficult to say what exact percentage of the budget should have been allocated to food security interventions. Yet, although the JP is titled *Sustainable Food and Nutrition Security*, it was actually designed mostly as a nutrition programme with a strong focus on humanitarian assistance and very little on technical cooperation. Moreover, income-generating activities were not contemplated in the design.

The issues of gender mainstreaming and inequality are not explicitly addressed in the ProDoc. Gender is briefly mentioned among "other causes" of malnutrition of the target population, but no intervention strategy is laid out to mainstream a gender equality approach in the JP implementation.

ii) Results framework, M&E and communication Strategy.

The results framework reflects in a clear manner the outputs and activities of the JP. However, the underlying theory of change and the causal linkages between activities, outputs and outcomes could have been better structured.

Particularly, the logical linkages between improved nutritional status of students and completion rates might be valid but proven overly ambitious. The expected outcome could be achieved with full coverage of the Government led *School Feeding Programme* and over the medium to long term, but not within the time and resources allocated to this component of the JP. On the other hand, the logical linkages between improved nutritional status of students and school enrollment are not articulated in the ProDoc and the working hypothesis is not clear. In light of the above, the target of 20% increased school access and 25% higher completion rate seem to have been set randomly. There is no evidence of any analysis done to set such targets.

The M&E framework of the JP mostly focused on tracking and quantifying activities. The great majority of the indicators used are not valid to measure intermediate development changes or to check the validity of the theory of change. For example, while the number of health facilities trained and equipped to provide relevant health and nutrition services has been regularly reported, there are no indicators to track trends in the coverage and access to such services relative to the overall target population in the four selected districts. Similarly, there are indicators to measure the number of farmers groups or school gardens supported, but no data were collected on the quantity of food produced relative to the estimated needs of the target population, thus impeding to quantify the contribution to food security. Finally, the distribution of supplementary or therapeutic feeding with JP support was reported in terms of metric tons distributed or absolute number of beneficiaries reached, but there are no indicators reflecting the percentage of target population receiving the services. The only exception are the indicators reflecting the *percentage of children 6 to 59 months who received vitamin A, deworming during the last six months and the percentage of post partum women who received vitamin A and pregnant and lactating women received iron-folic acid supplementation*. However, these data are reported based on national statistics and not broken down by districts; therefore, they are not useful to follow trends in the areas covered and to explore causal linkages with the inputs delivered by the JP.

Tracking behavior change is a much more complicated issue, particularly doing it in quantitative terms. While the JP tracked the number of mother support groups established, it did not develop any type of indicators measuring defined operational dimensions of the expected changes. In this connection, it should be noted that only four joint monitoring visits were conducted through out the implementation of the JP: one for each district. While these visits produced very detailed reports with useful information, they were conducted almost at the end of the JP, to comply with the recommendations of the mid term evaluation.

To be fair, it should be stated that the shortcomings in the monitoring framework are also determined by external factors. First, updated data on the overall target population, their nutritional status and estimated needs are not easily available in the country and often not reliable, as stated also in the report of the Inter-Ministerial Food and Nutrition Security task Force. Second, the reporting requirement from Head Quarters, including the MDG-F reporting formats, tend to focus more on quantity than on quality and the numbers required to be reported are in absolute terms, thus of limited utility to track progress in relative terms, and to make a judgment.

Finally, regarding the communication and advocacy strategy of the JP, has already been discussed how it was successful in strategically placing the issue of malnutrition on the political

debate and the government agenda. At the local level too, the advocacy work of the mother support groups seems to be effective. One point which was highlighted in the interviews and is mentioned in available documents, is that the communication campaigns at the local level could benefit from more in-depth analysis of the cultural and anthropological features of the target population, particularly as relates to kinship relations, beliefs and habits, so as to better convey the messages.

3.3. Analysis of the Implementation Process

The implementation process is analysed from four main perspective namely: i) budget delivery and administrative efficiency; ii) Coordination iii) Governing mechanisms,

i) Budget delivery and administrative efficiency.

In spite of some initial delays, and considering that the JP gained a no cost extension until March 2013, budget delivery seems to be fairly in line with the plans. As illustrated in table 5, the total delivery rate as of 30 September 2012 is 86.8%. Outcome 1 is the most advanced with 96.1% of the funds already committed and 90.02% disbursement rate. Considering that this is the greater portion of the budget (87% of the total), it is arguable that by and large the JP benefited from an efficient administration.

Table 5 Estimated Total Budget Delivery by Results as of 30 September 2012 (excluding programme support costs)			
Expected Outcome	Expected Output	Delivery rates	
		% Committed to date	% Disbursed to date
Outcome 1: Improved health and nutritional status of pregnant and lactating women and under-five children in 4 selected districts	1.1 Strengthened health system's and local communities ' capacities to increase availability of, access to and utilization of quality essential nutrition services at SISC posts, Health posts and Community health centres in four districts.	99.7%	89.5%
	1.2 Increased demand for essential nutrition services by the families and communities, especially by the poor and vulnerable women and children in 4 districts.	98.7%	95.8%
	1.3 Increased production, availability and utilization of micronutrient-rich foods among women and children in 4 districts	92.8%	88.2%
Sub Total Outcome 1		96.1%	90.02%
Outcome 2: 20% more children access, and 25% more children complete compulsory quality basic education in 4 selected districts	2. Increased nutrition education in schools and communities through introduction of school gardens and consumption of nutritious foods, contributing to improved quality of meals provided by schools.	65.2%	63.6%
Sub Total Outcome 2		65.2%	63.6%
Outcome 3: Food security and nutrition surveillance system established and functioning at all sub-districts in 4 districts	3.1 Strengthen capacities of Central and District Team to utilize food security information and Early Warning Systems (FSIEWS) at national, district and community levels	73.4%	73.4%
	3.2 Improved capacity of District Food Security and Disaster Management Committees to plan and	43.9%	43.9%

	support mitigation and response initiatives.		
Sub total outcome 3		66.7%	66.7%
GRAND TOTAL		92.1%	86.8%

Source: PMU October 2012

ii) Coordination

The evaluation found good examples of coordination within the different components of the JP. UNICEF, WHO and WFP are complementing each other in supporting the SISCA and CMAM. Similarly, FAO and WFP are working together in supporting the school gardens initiative and the Inter-Ministerial Task Force on Food and Nutrition Security.

However, the operational synergies cutting across different components could have been better exploited through closer operational coordination, particularly between behaviour change and food security related activities that were planned and implemented in parallel. As already mentioned, it should be acknowledged that the JP responded proactively to the recommendations of the Mid Term Evaluation (MTE), but this occurred only towards the end of the Programme lifecycle, and the institutional response to these recommendations was fairly slow. The MTE report was submitted in September 2011 and the corresponding actions were taken in March 2012.

In connection with the above, it should also be noted that the first disbursement to the JP was released on 13 November 2009 and the JP Coordinator came on board only on 28 March 2011, when the programme was already half way through its implementation. Arguably, this affected the management of the Programme as one coherent unit. The delay in hiring the JP coordinator was due to three factors. First, the fact that the start-up time to put in place the PMU was not factored into the design; second, some inefficiency in procurement of human resources; third, an objective difficulty in finding qualified international staff willing and available to work in Timor-Leste, as evidenced by the fact that the post had to be advertised twice before finding the right person.

This less than optimal coordination is also explained by structural limitations within the UN System that cannot be addressed at the country level. First and foremost, the management arrangement of the JP clearly state that each organization will assume complete programmatic and financial responsibility for the funds disbursed to it and will follow its respective regulations as relates to the execution process. In this context, there are different levels of delegated authority and different reporting lines; as well as different financial and substantive reporting formats and requirement. These structural factors negatively affect internal communication, joint planning and monitoring and timely decision-making to redirect the implementation whenever required. Moreover, the differences in delegated authority at the country level also imply different pace in the implementation.

In addition to these structural factors, there are political factors related to each organization's mandate, perception of priorities, visibility and institutional culture. Interviews with the UN staff clearly revealed that none of them take ownership of the JP programme as such, but only of the component under their direct responsibility. In fact, political will to work together is a critical variable, as much as the structural limitations are.

iii) Governing Mechanisms.

The governing bodies of the JP worked as important platforms for inter-institutional dialogue but also needed time to be put in place and faced a learning curve for their efficient and effective functioning.

As evidenced by the meeting minutes, the NSC was a space for the UN to advocate for under nutrition as one of the national development priorities, and to better inform the Government on the approach and strategic directions of the JP. By the same token, they were an opportunity for the Government to feed back into that and progressively assume greater ownership of the initiative.

At the managerial level, the PMC has also resulted in an important platform for inter-institutional coordination. The stakeholders interviewed coincide in this analysis. In particular, it has been noted how the PMC provided the opportunity for the UN agencies and the Government institutions involved to get to know each other better and to share their different lines of intervention in search of better coordination and synergy, both between the UN and national institutions and within these two universes.

The challenges mentioned by stakeholders for the effective functioning of the PMC include language issues. On the one hand, most of the UN international staff do not speak Tetum and tend to use English in the meetings. On the other, while Government officials may understand it, not all of them feel comfortable in using English as a working language. This made it difficult sometimes for the Government counterparts to actively engage in the discussions. However, it should also be noted that progress has been made in translating relevant documents into Tetum and in using simultaneous interpretation during the meetings.

Finally, it should be noted that the governing mechanisms focused at the central level. There were no coordination or decision making mechanisms involving local stakeholders, such as beneficiary groups, local representative of state institutions, civil society organization or UN field staff. From this point of view, the Programme adopted a top down approach in decision-making and management.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The conclusions of the report are structured below around the five evaluation criteria, namely: a) relevance; b) effectiveness; c) efficiency; d) ownership and c) sustainability.

a) Relevance

There is ample evidence showing that under-nutrition and food insecurity are key development challenges in Timor-Leste. In this context, the integrated approach presented in the ProDoc is highly relevant to the country's needs and aligned to the national priorities as laid out in the relevant policy and strategy documents. It is also in line with the MDG-F thematic window on food security and child nutrition as well as linked to the UNDAF.

b) Efficiency

Overall, the evaluation revealed that the Programme benefited from efficient administration. Some minor issues have been detected in relation to the timely and complete delivery of the different types of nutrition supplies being distributed, and to timeliness in staff recruitment processes. Particularly as relates to hiring the first JP coordinator. This suggests that there might be some room for improvement in planning the procurement of goods and services.

Building consensus on strategies and approaches among the different stakeholders involved in the Programme is a time and energy consuming process and may affect timely and efficient decision-making. However, the eventual losses in efficiency can be compensated by significant gains in terms of coherence, synergy and effectiveness on the ground.

In connection with the above, it should be noted that the *modus operandi* of the JP was new to the parties involved and inevitably implied a learning curve. Moreover, the different reporting lines, formats and requirements, and the different levels of authority delegated to each Head of Agency are structural constraining factors to efficient joint action and go beyond the control of UN Country offices.

c) Effectiveness

The evaluation identified some positive emerging outcomes in each component of the JP. However, the potential added value of the joint intervention has not been fully deployed due to less than optimal operational internal synergy, particularly between nutrition security and food security related activities. Moreover, the latter was given a much lighter weight from an operational point of view, thus creating gaps in the practical application of the JP integrated approach.

As mentioned in the methodology section of this report, it is impossible to make a judgment on the impact of the JP on the nutritional status of the target population due to lack of data. By the same token, the enhanced coverage of, access to and demand for relevant health and nutrition services cannot be measured from a quantitative point of view. Based on the interview conducted, the coverage and access to health and nutrition services seems to be increasing. In this context, the CMAM programme and the SISCa as a decentralized service delivery mechanism seem to be yielding positive results thanks to inputs from different UN organizations as well as national institutions. However, reaching out to the most remote communities remains a challenge. Moreover, inpatient and outpatient treatment and follow-up in the context of the CMAM could benefit from greater investment in and technical cooperation with the national

health system. Particularly as relates to greater availability of equipment and human resources and to continued training and mentoring for staff professional development.

The work being done with farmers' groups is also proving to be effective in contributing to increased food availability and income generation at the community level. The economic incentive brought about by the possibility of selling part of the harvest, which was not foreseen in the JP design, is proving to be a critical factor for the success of this initiative. On the other hand, the school gardens are having a demonstrative effect, but are facing challenges for their sustainability due to lack of incentives for greater engagement of the relevant local stakeholders. Moreover, the causal linkages between the demonstrative effect of school gardens and school access and completion rates proved to be unclear and overly ambitious relative to the time and resources allocated to the JP.

Finally, the Mother Support Groups are proving to be an important entry point into the community and an effective multiplier to raise awareness and generate behavior changes related to exclusive breastfeeding, appropriate complementary feeding practices and child care. However, their potential effectiveness has been limited by the fact that activities aiming at increasing food availability have not been implemented in the same communities where they operate. Only towards the end of the Programme, in response to the recommendations of the mid term evaluation, efforts have been for better convergence of these two lines of activity, and this was limited to 50% of the MSG supported.

d) Ownership

The JP was conceived in an immediate post crisis situation and, under these circumstances, its design was mainly led by the UN agencies. In this connection, ensuring ownership and leadership of national institutions can be looked at as a work in progress and something that progressively developed through-out the implementation of the Programme. In fact, as already mentioned, the governance and management models proposed by the MDG-F implied a learning curve for all the parties involved.

As of today, there is documentary evidence of the Government of Timor-Leste's political commitment to address the issues of food and nutrition security in their multiple dimensions. The fact that the CMAM and the FSIEWS have been up-scaled at national level under the leadership of national institutions is an indication of ownership, as well as the active engagement of the Ministry of Agriculture in supporting local food production.

On the other hand, although there has been a dramatic increase in the resources allocated to the Nutrition Department of the Ministry of Health, the overall budget allocation to the Ministries of Health and Agriculture is not significantly increasing relative to the overall Government budget¹⁰. By the same token, although the Ministry of Education is leading the implementation of the *School Feeding Programme* through a local food purchasing strategy, the funds allocated so far are less than one third of the total amount needed for full coverage: based on the data reported in may 2012 by the Inter-Ministerial Food and Nutrition Security Task Force, the current allocation to this Programme amounts to 8 million dollars, while the estimated need is almost 27 millions.

¹⁰ Ref. Table 4 in this report.

e) Sustainability

The sustainability of the benefits being generated by the JP varies depending on the different components and type of interventions.

Home gardens and livestock breeding are likely to be sustainable, thanks to the local capacities that are being developed and to the economic incentive represented by the prospects for income generation, from which farmers are already benefiting in different ways. However, the greater risk is the possibility of an abrupt interruption of the activities in support of local farmers before they get to a level of maturity that can ensure their technical sustainability. In this connection, the will and capacity of the Ministry of Agriculture to fully take over in the technical assistance and to secure additional funds after the end of the JP will be critical.

The production of Timor Vita by Timor Global also has good potential for sustainability in as much as it combines private and public interests in the framework of corporate social responsibility. Nevertheless, some challenges relate to the need of increasing production and reducing costs of Timor Vita, which implies greater investment in the plant and increases in national production of raw material.

On the other hand, the sustainability of the School Gardens initiative is a question mark. Particularly because of the limited time and capacity of school teachers and children to take care of the gardens on a regular basis and due to the lack of strong incentives for schoolteachers and parents to seriously commit to this initiative

Looking at the larger picture, a key challenge is the sustainability of nutritional outcomes that can be generated by the distribution of supplementary feeding. The latter implies efforts to progressively step out of the current dependency on humanitarian assistance interventions that constituted a substantial part of the Programme

5. LESSONS LEARNED

Based on the findings and conclusions of the evaluation, some lessons can be distilled in the following broad areas: a) Policy; b) Governance; c) Management and d) Resources.

a) Policy

Policies addressing behavior and health related factors are relevant for nutrition security in Timor-Leste. Similarly, humanitarian assistance in the form of supplementary and therapeutic food distribution will probably play an important role in the country for still some time. However, the findings of the evaluation also suggest that a greater emphasis on addressing structural factors, including income-generating activities at the local level, might need to be more directly addressed to generate sustainable nutrition outcomes.

The evaluation revealed the existence of different views within the UN Agencies and Government counterparts regarding the relative weight of the multiple factors influencing under nutrition. Some stress more behavior factors, others insist more on the direct linkages with food security and economic constraints. One of the global references in this debate is considered to be the document *Scaling up Nutrition, What Will it Cost?*¹¹ (SUN) published by the World Bank in 2010. The SUN stresses three groups of interventions to be scaled up because they are considered to be the most effective in improving nutrition outcomes, namely: i) behavior change interventions; ii) micronutrient and de-worming interventions and iii) complementary and therapeutic feeding interventions.

The SUN exercise is focused on the 36 countries that carry 90 percent of the global burden of under nutrition and on an additional 32 countries with underweight or stunting greater than 20%, of which Timor-Leste is part. However, none of the countries included in the two lists is a high-income country. Actually, according to the latest WB classification¹², 92% of the countries composing the first group (90 % of the global burden of under nutrition) are low or low-middle income countries. Similarly, low or low-middle income countries represent 75% of the second group (underweight or stunting greater than 20%).

These figures strongly suggest that per capita income does matter for long term and sustainable nutrition outcomes. Interestingly, this macro analysis is in line with the findings of the interviews with JP beneficiaries who coincide in considering economic constraints as a fundamental factor for limited access to food and for malnutrition.

In fact, while emphasizing the three groups of intervention mentioned above, the SUN explicitly says that *...many other indirect interventions can be implemented through other sectors, such as agriculture, education, and rural development, that will produce nutrition impacts, often referred to as the "longer routes" to improving nutrition*¹³.

In this connection, it is legitimate to argue that greater emphasis on these *longer routes* might ensure greater effectiveness and sustainability over the medium to long run, helping to to step

¹¹ *Scaling up Nutrition, What Will It Cost?* Susan Horton, Mera Shekar, Christine McDonald, Ajay Mahal and Jana Kristene Brooks, The World Bank, 2010

¹² WB List of Economies, July 2012

¹³ SUN page XXI.

out of a dependency relation from humanitarian assistance, be this provided by international actors or by the national government.

In this connection, it is legitimate to argue that greater emphasis on these *longer routes* might ensure greater effectiveness and sustainability over the medium to long run and would help to step out of a dependency relation from humanitarian assistance, be this provided by international actors or by the national government.

In the context of the Joint Programme there are some practical examples of initiatives addressing multiple factors in a complementary way, although they are not yet consolidated and self-sustained processes.

Where Mother Support Groups and Farmers Groups are working together, they address behavior related as well as food availability and income related factors. They seem to be effective in combining greater local food production with income generation, greater awareness of appropriate nutrition practices and greater demand for health and nutrition services. Another interesting example is the public private partnership for the production of *Timor Vita*. In this case, while addressing the urgent issue of supplementary feeding for children, the JP is also having a positive externality on the local economy by contributing to employment generation. In fact, while the production capacity of the plant at the moment covers only 30% of the total national target, this supplementary food it is being regularly distributed through the SISCa and the company that makes it is employing 40 workers. According to the interview conducted, from the perspective of Timor Global this is a *Corporate Social Responsibility* initiative, not a pure business proposition, but it is being profitable and seems to have good prospects due to wide acceptance of the product and growing demand.

It would be interesting to conduct more in depth studies on these specific initiatives once they get to a higher level of maturity and consolidation, so as to assess the actual impact on their target groups.

b) Governance

The evaluation revealed that the NSC and PMC can work effectively as platform for political dialogue between the UN and the Government and for inter-institutional coordination among the different actors involved on both sides. However, the evaluation also revealed that the governance of the JP could have benefit from a more decentralized approach, in particular from establishing coordination mechanisms at the district level too. In fact, at this level, no mechanisms were put in place to ensure regular meetings between districts delegates of the relevant lines Ministries, UN counterparts and civil society actors. Such kind of mechanisms might be needed to better analyze risks and opportunities from an integrated territorial perspective, with more direct linkages to the operational activities on the ground. Ultimately, they could result in greater coordination and effectiveness of development cooperation interventions.

c) Management

Related to the above, another important lesson of this evaluation has to do with the approach to monitoring, as a key dimension of results based management. Monitoring of the JP was focused on budget delivery and on verifying accomplishments in the implementation of

activities from an almost exclusively quantitative point of view. Although, reportedly some discussions were held, there is no written evidence of any qualitative analysis of the JP as a whole, cutting across its different components and sub-components and addressing issues of continued relevance, potential effectiveness and sustainability from a more systemic perspective.

Such an approach to monitoring might be useful for accountability on the implementation of activities as planned, but it also suggests that the culture of compliance is still dominant in the UN agencies involved over a culture of analysis. The latter, while taking the original plans as a point of departure, needs to question the validity of the initial working hypothesis on a regular basis and implies a certain degree of flexibility to adapt the management of the programme accordingly.

This lesson might be taken into account at country and Head Quarters level, particularly as relates to striking a better balance between quantitative and qualitative information in reporting formats and requirements.

d) Resources

The findings of the evaluation clearly show that much greater resource allocation is needed to achieve sustainable food and nutrition outcomes. According to the Inter-ministerial Task Force on Food and Nutrition Security, the allocation of Government resources to the *National School Feeding Programme* needs to be tripled to achieve full coverage, going from 8 to 26.9 million dollars in order to guarantee the promised 30 cents per day per student for the 311,390 students currently enrolled. Similarly, greater public investments might be needed to enhance the productive capacity for Timor Vita. In fact, according to Timor Global Senior Executive, private international banks are unlikely to give credit to them, as Timor-Leste is considered a high-risk country for investment.

Finally, the equipment and staffing capacity of the Ministry of Health at national and local level needs to be increased to further enhance coverage and effectiveness of relevant health and nutrition services. In this connection, more funds might also need to be allocated to training and refresher courses to be conducted on a regular basis to ensure continued professional development of the staff.

6. Recommendations

In view of the findings and conclusions of this evaluation, the following is recommended to the UN development system operating in Timor-Leste:

- I. While continuing to address malnutrition from the point of view of humanitarian assistance, which is justified by the current country context, place greater emphasis on long-term technical cooperation and capacity development in the areas of: a) health; b) education; c) rural development and d) agriculture.

The latter are key priorities in the national development plan and highly related to food and nutrition security. In this context, a truly integrated approach with strong operational linkages should be ensured in the context of the UNDAF and related UN programming documents.

- II. Continue to strengthen national leadership of development intervention and inter-institutional coordination on the Government and the UN side.

Although the MDG-F JP is coming to an end, it would be useful to maintain permanent platforms for information sharing and joint decision-making at political and managerial level, involving the relevant line Ministries as well as UN Agencies, Funds and Programmes. In this connection it would be good to ensure close coordination between the Food and Nutrition Security Task Force and the Nutrition Working Group. Similar coordination bodies could be created at the District level to enhance joint monitoring and operational coordination on the ground. At the national political level the UNDAF Steering Committee could assume the functions of the NSC.

- III. To start immediately exploring additional sources of funding to ensure the continuity and consolidation of the processes set in motion or supported by the JP.

In this connection, it should be noted that while the supplementary and therapeutic feeding and behavioral change components of the JP are likely to benefit from significant additional resources being allocated by the European Union, no additional funding is envisaged at the moment to ensure the continuity and consolidation of the farmers groups currently supported by the JP.

- IV. Support the implementation of the local purchasing strategy of the School Feeding Programme by strengthening the productive capacity of farmers groups so that they can become local suppliers to the Government.

This could be an important dynamic for local economic development with positive outcomes in food and nutrition security and poverty reduction at large.

- V. In connection with the above, and in light of the need to prioritize the allocation of limited resources, it is recommended to reallocate to farmers groups any funds currently allocated to the School Gardens that have not been committed.

This might limit the risk of an abrupt interruption of one of the most effective and sustainable initiatives of the JP. School Gardens related activities might be resumed once new sufficient funding is secured

- VI. To further support the production of iodized salt so as to consolidate the entire production chain and ensure that sufficient quality standards are met for local producers to become providers for the iodized salt currently distributed by WFP as part of its food basket items.

- VII. For similar programmes in the future, it is recommended to put more emphasis in analyzing gender related factors that influence nutritional status of the target population and to address them from an operational point of view during implementation.

Annex I

Joint Programme Monitoring Framework up-dated on 31 May 2012

Indicators	Means of verification (data source)	Frequency of data collection	Baseline (2009)	Target (by 2012)	Latest data	Reporting Agency
Outcome 1. Improved health and nutritional status of pregnant and lactating women and under-five children in 4 selected districts						
1.0.1. Prevalence of underweight children under five years old	DHS MoH-HMIS	3-4 years Monthly	44.7% (DHS) 45.7% (Coverage of weighing: 20%) (HMIS)	42%	32% (Coverage of weighing: 22%) (Jan – Dec 2011, HMIS)	All
1.0.2. Percentage of women aged 15-49 with body mass index (BMI) less than 18.5	DHS	3-4 years	27.2% (DHS)		N/A	All
Output 1.1. Strengthened health system's and local communities' capacity to increase availability of, and access to quality essential nutrition services at SISCa, Health Posts and CHCs						
1.1.1. #CHCs and HPs providing outpatient services on CMAM	MoH data	Bi-annually	71 (27 CHCs, 44 HPs)	196 (65 CHCs and 131 HPs)	230 (63 CHCs, 167 HPs) oriented to provide CMAM outpatient services	UNICEF
1.1.2. # SAM cases 6-59 months receiving appropriate treatment under CMAM	MoH data	Monthly	285	3000 (in 2012)	1809 SAM patients admitted and treated in OTP and ITP (2011)	UNICEF
1.1.3. # hospitals accredited as "Baby Friendly Hospital"	MoH data	Bi-annually	0	2	0	UNICEF
1.1.4. # CHC having IYCF corner to	MoH data	Bi-annually	0	6	4	UNICEF

Indicators	Means of verification (data source)	Frequency of data collection	Baseline (2009)	Target (by 2012)	Latest data	Reporting Agency
provide counseling by trained counselors						
Output 1.2. Increased demand for essential nutrition services by the families and communities, especially by the poor and vulnerable women and children						
1.2.1. Number of mother support groups (MSGs) established	Progress report (Alola foundation)	Bi-annually	37	10 new established per year with JP funds	77, of which 20 established with JP funds (2010-2011)	UNICEF
1.2.2. # pregnant women and lactating mothers who received IYCF counseling from MSGs.	Progress report (Alola foundation)	Bi-annually	15,393	28,250 (in 2012)	15,411 (2010) 25,002 (2011) (Double counting possible)	UNICEF
Output 1.3. Increased production, availability and consumption of micronutrient-rich foods among women and children						
1.3.1. # children 6-23 months who received at least 2 months of multiple micronutrient supplements (MNP)	Household survey, Progress report	Monthly	0	3000	1200	UNICEF
1.3.2. % HH consuming iodized salt	Household survey		59.9% (TLSLS 2007)	70%	N/A	UNICEF
1.3.3. # salt production facilities (sites) implementing salt iodization in 4 districts	Progress report	Bi-annually	0	5	4	UNICEF
1.3.4. % children 6-59 months who received vitamin A supplementation in the last 6 months	Household survey MoH-HMIS	DHS: once in 3-4 yrs HMIS: Monthly	50.7% (DHS) 46.1% (HMIS)	65%	59% (Jan-Dec 2011, HMIS)	UNICEF

Indicators	Means of verification (data source)	Frequency of data collection	Baseline (2009)	Target (by 2012)	Latest data	Reporting Agency
1.3.5. % Post-partum women who received vitamin A and iron supplementation	Household survey, MoH-HMIS	Monthly, quarterly, yearly	38.1% (HMIS)	50%	37% (Jan-Dec 2011, HMIS)	UNICEF
1.3.6. Metric tonnes of food produced from pilot local blended food project	Production report (Timor Global)	Monthly	0	1500	1268	WFP
1.3.7. # children 6-23 months receiving Timor Vita.	MoH data	Monthly	0	43,000	27,671	WFP
1.3.8. # children 24-59 months with MAM receiving Timor Vita.	MoH data	Monthly	0	15,000	14,141	WFP
1.3.9. # pregnant women and lactating mothers receiving Timor Vita.	MoH data	Monthly	0	29,000	21,132	WFP
1.3.10. # HH consuming vegetables from their home gardens	Monitoring report	Monthly, yearly	N/A	1,000	700	FAO
1.3.11. # farmer groups applying Good Agricultural Practice (GAP)	Monitoring report	Monthly, yearly	0	100	75	FAO
1.3.12. # farmer groups raising and consuming small scale livestock	Monitoring report	Monthly, yearly	N/A	30	15	FAO
1.3.13. # aquaculture activities undertaken	Monitoring report	Monthly, yearly	N/A	15	0	FAO
Outcome 2. 20% more children access, and 25% more children complete, free compulsory quality basic education						
Output 2. Increased nutrition education in schools and communities through introduction of school gardens and consumption of nutritious food, contributing to improved quality of meals provided by schools						

Indicators	Means of verification (data source)	Frequency of data collection	Baseline (2009)	Target (by 2012)	Latest data	Reporting Agency
2.1.1. # school gardens established and providing vegetables	Monitoring report	Monthly	0	100	84	FAO
2.1.2. # schools trained in nutrition, utilizing school gardens	Monitoring report	Monthly	0	100	44	WFP
2.1.3. # schools adding vegetables obtained from school gardens in school meals	Monitoring report	Monthly	0	100	44	FAO
Outcome 3. Food Security and Nutrition Surveillance Systems established and functioning at all sub-districts of the 4 districts						
3.0.1. % food-insecure communities visited among those recommended by district verification meetings	MAF reports	Quarterly	0	100%	0	WFP
Output 3.1. Strengthened capacity of central and district teams to utilize Food Security Information and Early Warning System (FSIEWS) at the national, district and community levels						
3.1.1. # districts producing monthly integrated FSIEW datasheets in the last 3 months	MAF reports	Monthly	0	4	4	WFP
3.1.2. Percentage of sub-districts reporting monthly to the district level in the last 3 months	MAF reports	Monthly	0	100%	85%	WFP
3.1.3. Number of monthly district reports produced on time by central team in the last	MAF reports	Monthly	0	24	16	WFP

Indicators	Means of verification (data source)	Frequency of data collection	Baseline (2009)	Target (by 2012)	Latest data	Reporting Agency
6 months						
Output 3.2. Improved capacity of district food security committees to plan, support mitigation and response initiatives						
3.2.1. # districts where verification team meetings are conducted on a quarterly basis in the last 6 months	MAF reports	Quarterly	0	4	4	WFP

Annex II

Key documents consulted

- Terms of Reference of the Evaluation
- Joint Programme Document (PRODOC)
- UNDAF Narrative
- Comoro Declaration
- MDG-F Joint Implementation Guidelines
- Terms of Reference of the thematic window
- JP Mid term Evaluation
- Management Responses to the MTE
- Progress reports
- Minutes of NSC and PMC documents
- Work Plans
- MDG-F Guidance Note on Final Evaluation Reports
- Timor-Leste Strategic Development Plan, 2011-2030.
- Nutritional Strategy 2012-217, Ministry of Health, Government of Timor-Leste (Draft for Discussion
- Quarter I 2012 Situation Assessment Report, Inter-ministerial Food and Nutrition Security Task Force, May 2012
- National Health Sector Strategic Plan, 2011-2030
- *Scaling up Nutrition, What Will It Cost?* Susan Horton, Mera Shekar, Christine McDonald, Ajay Mahal and Jana Kristene Brooks, The World Bank, 2010

Annex III

Field Mission Itinerary for Final Evaluation (18 Sep to 9 Oct 2012)

Date/Day	Time	Events/Persons to Meet
18 Sep (Tue)	15:00	Arrival
19 Sep (Wed)	08:30-9:30	Initial meeting with Marianne Tychsen of RC office, Mayang Sari of UNICEF and Rafiqul Haider and Julio Santos of PMU
	10:00-12:00	Plenary meeting with the PMC members
	13:30-15:00	Group meeting with Mayang Sari, Teresinha Soares, Min Yuan and Julio Santos of UNICEF
	15:00-16:15	Meeting with Rita Fernandes, Task Manager, Case Study Evaluation under MDG-F M&E initiative
	17:00-17:30	Protocol meeting with Hongwei Gao-Representative and Riitta Poutiainen-Deputy Representative of UNICEF
20 Sep (Thu)	14:00-15:30	Meeting with Laura Soriano Ruiz, Project Officer, AECID, Timor-Leste
21 Sep (Fri)	09:00-10:30	Group meeting with Lorenzo Borges Fontes (DG), Octavio da Costa, Manuel Lamberto Vitor and Joao Piedade of MAF
	14:00-15:30	Group meeting with Antonio da Costa and Amelia of MCIE
24 Sep (Mon)	09:00-10:30	Group meeting with Angelina Fernandes of Alola Foundation
	11:00-12:00	Meeting Luis Lopes of Hamordade (NGO)
	12:00-13:00	Group meeting with Nadia Hadi and Marianne Tychsen of RC office
	13:30-14:45	Group meeting with Ruben Flamarique Urdin and Adelio Lopes of FAO
	15:00-15:30	Protocol meeting with Finn Reske-Nielsen-ASRSG and UN Resident Coordinator
25 Sep (Tue)	08:30-09:30	Group meeting with Isabel Gomes, Joao Bosco, Duarte Maubuti and Filiciano Gomes Fernandes of MoH
	16:00-17:30	Group meeting with Antonia Avella-Deputy Country Director, Jose Sarmento, Anastacio Soriano and Diana Borges of WFP
26 Sep (Wed)	09:00-11:00	Group meeting with Francisco do Rosario, Laurentino do Carmo and Adolfo da Costa of MSS
	14:00-15:30	Meeting with Jorge Luna-Representative, Luis dos Reis and Crispin da Costa Araujo of WHO
27 Sep (Thu)	08:00-10:00	Travel to Manatuto
	10:00-11:30	Meetings with District Administrator, Director Education, Director DHS and Director of Agriculture and Fishery
	11:30-12:30	Visit Manatuto CHC and meeting with Doctors and staff members
	14:00-16:00	Visit school garden and meeting with the students, teachers and parents in Obrato Suco in Lacro Sub district
	16:00-17:30	FGD with mother support group in Kribus Suco in Lacro Sub district
28 Sep (Fri)	08:00-12:00	FGD with Suco council members and community leaders in Ohorai Suco in Lacro Sub district
	12:00-15:30	Visit home garden, livestock production group and meeting with the family members and neighbors in Hohorai Suco in Lacro Sub district
	15:30-17:00	Travel back to Dili
01 Oct (Mon)	8:00-16:00	Travel to Oecusse
02 Oct (Tue)	08:30-10:30	Meetings with District Administrator, Director Education, Director DHS and Director of Agriculture and Fishery
	10:30-12:00	Visit Oecusse referral hospital and meeting with staff members (DG-Hospital and Nutritionist) in Oecusse district HQ
	14:00-17:00	Visit school garden and meeting with the students, teachers and parents in Lifau

Date/Day	Time	Events/Persons to Meet
		Suco in Pantemakasar Sub district
03 Oct (Wed)	9:30-10:30	FGD with Suco Council members, community leaders, mother support groups in suco Naimeka in Pantemakasar Sub district
	10:30-12:30	Visit home garden, livestock production group and meeting with the family members and neighbors in Naimeka suco in Pantemakasar Sub district
	16:30-17:30	Meeting with Jose Mendes of Hadomi Progresu (NGO) in Oecusse
04 Oct (Thu)	08:00-17:30	Return to Dili
	15:00-15:30	Visit salt iodization industry in Liquica
05 Oct (Fri)	09:00-10:00	Meeting with Felix Piedade, Coordinator, National MDG Secretariat of MoF
	13:30-17:30	Visit to Timor-Vita at Railaco in Ermera District
08 Oct (Mon)	09:00-10:00	Debriefing meeting with Hongwei Gao- UNICEF Representative
	11:00-11:30	Debriefing meeting with Finn Reske-Nielsen- ASRSG and UN Resident Coordinator
	14:00-17:00	Debriefing to all stakeholders including heads of the implementing UN agencies and policy and technical level government officials
09 Oct (Tue)	14:00	Depart Dili