

Increasing on-farm labour productivity for sustainable production, nutrition and inclusive livelihood gains in Timor-Leste



Key details

Location

Timor-Leste

Duration

Start Jul 2024

End Jun 2028

Budget

AUD 2,950,000

Commissioned organisation

Charles Darwin University

Partners

Charles Darwin University; Dom Bosco; Ministerio Agrikultura, Peskas, Pekuaria e Floresta; Toos Servisu Kmaan; Universidade Nasional Timor Lorosae

Project Leader

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Program

Soil and Land Management

Project code

SLAM/2020/141



Overview

This project aims to increase on-farm labour productivity to address the short supply of labour and several other constraints to agricultural productivity in Timor-Leste. Agricultural innovations have the potential to increase productivity and improve rural livelihoods.

Rural livelihoods and household incomes across Timor-Leste remain highly constrained by chronic levels of low-productivity agriculture. This is due to a combination of reasons, including nutrient-poor soils, low on-farm investment, highly variable rainfall, underdeveloped market opportunities and price competition from cheaper staple food imports. Labour for agriculture is often in short supply, contributing to low productivity and poverty.

Increasing labour productivity is required to maintain or increase current agricultural production levels. In addition to addressing labour shortages, increased labour productivity can also significantly increase farmer incomes and the overall contribution of agriculture to economic growth. At a national level, labour productivity is linked to economic development and can help reduce rural poverty.

The project seeks to introduce innovations that will increase productivity, not only on an area and input basis, but also increase the productivity per person involved in agriculture. Such innovations may include improved cropping and livestock strategies, mechanisation and managing soil fertility constraints. The project will work with farmers in 6 locations, across 3 regions, and collaborate with other partners to select innovations that can achieve at least a 30% improvement in labour productivity. The innovations will also be selected with a view to potential applicability across broader geographic areas or analogous farming systems.

- Assess adaptability and adoptability of the innovations
- Measure changes in yield, labour productivity and total farm productivity
- Measure changes in knowledge, attitudes and perceptions of innovations



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Objectives

- Increase crop yields by:
 - identifying and applying limiting soil nutrients
 - selecting productive germplasm and increasing access to seed
 - improving weed management
- Increase livestock production through feeding improved fodder
- Reduce labour requirements through introduction of mechanisation for land preparation, seeding, weeding, harvest and post-harvest management
- Increase agricultural science capacity of undergraduate and post-graduate students and university staff.

Activities

- Demonstrate innovations that successfully increase labour productivity