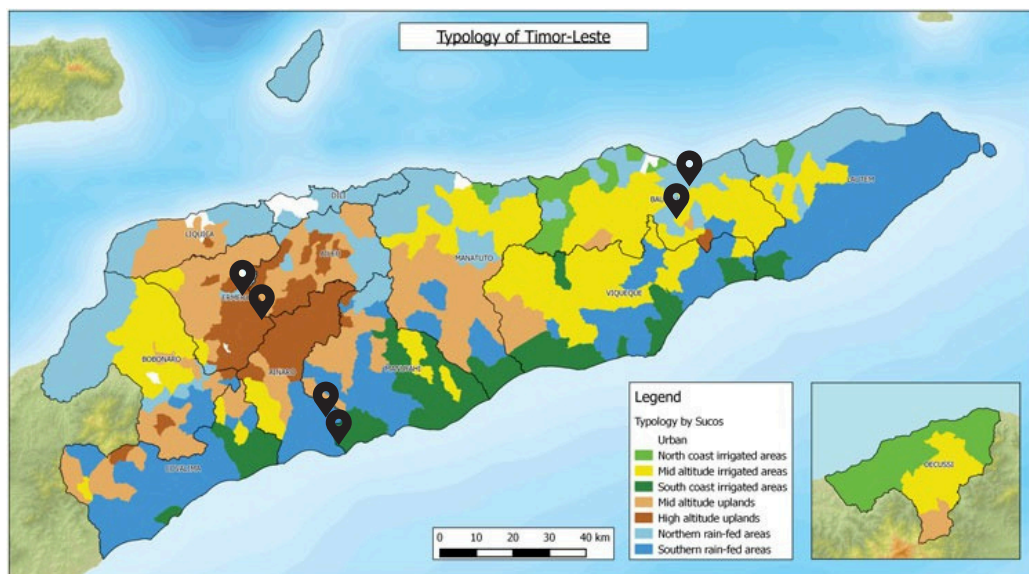


Increasing on-farm labour productivity for sustainable production, nutritional yield and livelihood gains in Timor-Leste

This four-year ACIAR-funded project will work with six participating communities, the Universidade Nasional of Timor-Lorosa'e (UNTL), the Ministry (MALFF), Dom Bosco Institute and others. Research activities aim to increase on-farm labour productivity in Timor-Leste. We will focus on increasing yield, reducing labour input, or both. On-farm labour supply continues to decline as people seek other opportunities; the remaining farmers must produce more each day to sustain production, and current methods are generally laborious. Measurement of nutrient yield will track the dietary benefits of innovations tested during the research.

The project places six participating communities at the centre of the research, in three municipalities, in three livelihood zones (Williams et al. 2018):

- Manufahi (Loro and Bemetan) in the Southern Rainfed Zone
- Ainaro (Raebuti-Udo and Gorema) in the Upland High-Altitude Zone
- Baucau (Saraida and Caihula) in the Inland Irrigable Watersheds Zone



The six communities participating in the project (Map source: Williams et al, 2018)

The commissioned organisation is Charles Darwin University (CDU), Darwin Australia. A Timor-Leste registered entity, TOSKA, has been established to facilitate and coordinate implementation on the ground. Key Timor-Leste partners include:

- To'os Servisu Kma'an (TOSKA)
- Universidade Nasional Timor-Lorosa'e (UNTL)
- Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Forestry and Fisheries (MALFF)
- Dom Bosco Technical Institute

Other partners include TOMAK in Timor-Leste and Polyteknik Pertanian Negeri Kupang, Indonesia. We expect additional partnership to be developed as the project matures.

The project aims to address national priorities, while working with participating communities who guide the choice of relevant research questions, assess how trialled innovations could be adopted or adapted, and guide refinements throughout the project, in their context. Research questions will cover:

- Identification of the limiting nutrient(s) in cropping systems and responses
- The benefits of 'micro-dosing' and low rates of fertilizer
- Improving weed management with or without herbicides
- Applying protected cropping for reliable vegetable production
- Forage preservation for improved livestock health and production
- Mechanisation for land preparation, seeding, weeding or harvest
- The labour productivity and nutritional yield gains from the above

The project findings should free-up household time - more time to earn income, gain skills or improve lifestyle.

This is a 4 year project that commenced in August 2024 and will conclude in August 2028.



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