

**TOWARDS REBUILDING THE VANILLA ECONOMIC POTENTIAL IN TIMOR-LESTE:**

**An Evaluation in to the Vanilla “Beans of Hope” (Livelihood Program) by Mary MacKillop Today in Railaco Sub-District of Ermera Municipality of Timor-Leste, 29 June - 10 August 2022**

**(A FINAL REPORT)**



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## Acronyms & Abbreviations

ASEAN	Association of South East Asian Nations
AVANSA	Advancing Agriculture project in Timor-Leste funded by USAID and Implemented by CARDNO in Timor-Leste
CCT	Timor Coffee Company
CPMS	A Multi-sectoral Production Cooperative movement in Timor-Leste
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
ERFA	Edmund Rice Foundation Australia
FBOs	Field Based Officers
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
FSN	Figus Sol Nascente, a Timorese Fig Plantation Private Company
IADE	Institute for Business Development Support
ILO	International Labour Organisation
KIIs	Key Informant Interviews
KPA	Village Commission for Planning and Accountability of the PNDS
MAF	Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MMT	Mary MacKillop Today
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organization
PNDS	National Program for Village Development
PSF	Pessoal Saude Familia (Community-based Health Volunteer)
R4D	Roads for Development
SECoop	State Secretary for Cooperative, Timor-Leste
SEFOPE	State Secretariat for the Policy on Professional Training and Employment
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
TOMAK	To'os ba Moris Diak (or Farming for Prosperity)
UNAMET	United Nations Mission in East Timor
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

## Acknowledgement

This evaluation was conducted for the Mary MacKillop Today (MMT) important Vanilla “Beans of Hope” (Livelihood Program) in Timor-Leste in the process towards withdrawing from the project and exiting by June 2024, with the expectation that agencies such as MAF, SECoop and Institute for Business Development Support (IADE) will support the vanilla farmers post exit in a proper institutional support system progressively. The Consultant field based evaluation works have been importantly accompanied by the MMT Field Based Officers: Pedro Rosa de Jesus, Manuel Borges Sarmento and the driver: Nelson Agapito Guterres.

Consultant highly acknowledges the trust and support provided by Mary MacKillop Today Senior Team Members: Charlotte Atherton, Alipio Baltazar, Agnes Brites Maia, Tessa Henwood-Mitchell, Milli Spence, Karen File, Juliana Mendonça and Basilio Nascimento within Sydney office and Timor-Leste office significantly. Consultant also appreciates invaluable recommendation from Ms. Emily Faller from the Edmund Rice Foundation Australia office.

A sincere appreciation is given to Vanilla farmers in Railaco-Kraik, Railaco-Leten, Taraço, Deleço and Samalete village for their generous welcoming and very friendly interactive manner of discussions have provided invaluable key information which the evaluation team needed for this evaluation work through Focus Group Discussion sessions and Key Informant Interview session already. In particular, the Consultant values a significant clarification and insights from the National Director for Coffee and Agroforestry Plants and His Key Senior Staff members who have significantly informed the technical information which the Consultant was looking for. Villages Chiefs of Taraço, Deleço, Railaco-Kraik and Railaco Leten provided very significant insights and recommendation already.

His Excellency, the State Secretary of Cooperative Timor-Leste, Mr. Elizario Ferreira has been an advocate for cooperative business idealism even before His current official role, has importantly elaborated an ideal community-managed model institution for Vanilla industry strategy which he recommends the Vanilla “Beans of Hope” project approach to be advancing from. Both Consultant and the project team members in Timor-Leste office (both in Dili and Railaco) always involved in a various analytical discussion sessions already both in persons and virtually even beyond the normal office working hours to argue and discuss on specific issues and ideas while confirming required information by the Consultant.

In the same time specific discussion and insights from the MMT Sydney office Team on specific development topics related with the Vanilla “Beans of Hope” (Livelihood Program) evaluation was greatly motivating the Consultant to provide this consultancy work outcome beyond a simply data and information finding report presentation only.

The project evaluation field work stay in Railaco has also significantly provided an important chance to properly witness and understand the specific current state of Timor-Leste Rural Development Miniature face in Ermera Municipality, an important coffee and Vanilla growing area in Timor-Leste already.

## I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

These days farmers in most of the coffee growing areas in some Municipalities of Timor-Leste continually recognize Vanilla as an alternative important high valued crop product of prominent economic value ahead of the coffee market price even though the regular fluctuation in market price. Vanilla is grown by the same ordinary coffee farmers in the most parts of Ermera, Aileu, Ainaro, Liquica, Manatuto and Manufahi Municipalities already. In Aileu specifically, Vanilla plantation is largely organized under the Dili Vanilla company, while in Ainaro Municipality all members of the CPMS are demanded to also plant Vanilla and flowers as part of their membership obligation. In Manufahi Municipality Vanilla production already initiated since the occupation of Indonesia and nowadays is believed to reach 2 tones of production annually<sup>1</sup>. In 2020 Timor-Leste exported \$1,04Millions in Vanilla and was the 4<sup>th</sup> most exported product in Timor-Leste so far.<sup>2</sup>

A continuation of Vanilla “Beans of Hope” (Livelihood Program) by Mary MacKillop Today in Timor-Leste since 2018 contributes significantly to the development of Timor-Leste’s specific Vanilla sector growth potential, however, it has been continuously receiving a less significant multi-sectoral institutional support and complementarity largely from the key government technical institution in particular the MAF in terms of specific guiding policy as well as at the level of Municipality competency to specifically supporting the need for project outreach and community mobilization hence, continuously widening the gaps in terms of the roles and approach are uneasily complementary. Mary MacKillop Today has importantly established two collaborative agreement MOUs with the State Secretary of Cooperative and Business Development Support Institution Timor-Leste (*or IADE*) and is in the final process to also sign an MOU with the MAF as well. However, the same spirit has to be ensured at the implementation level proper institutional support framework and competency of the agreeing government institutions already to readily provide the know how and facilitating role to the project progress ensuring the quality of time investment and outputs.

In Railaco, Vanilla farming activities have largely subsistence ways and is yet to be properly an intensive and a well-organized movement of development industry due to the absence of considered priority business plans by the existing farmers’ savings and loans group nor a cooperative group specific investment objective. Largely it has been an impact from a significant lack of vanilla farmers technical skill and knowledge, self-confidence and stronger Vanilla plantation management and organizational manners. The vast majority of farmers capability to grow numbers of Vanilla plants in Railaco already is varied from around 8 to 200 plants only, except is very little being observed already in Samalete and Taraço village that two individual vanilla growers initiated their Vanilla farm with a significant quantity and significant initial financial and time investment commitment, somehow they need to follow the proper technical and intensive practical management and manner significantly.

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with Mr. Fernando da Costa, a Vanilla producer and a member from Manufahi Municipality Intellectual group (July 2022)

<sup>2</sup> <https://oec.world/en/profile/bilateral-product/vanilla/reporter/tls#>

In order to create economies of scale for individual farmer business of Vanilla it needs to achieve the significant production quantity and quality target which requires to be continually motivated at the Vanilla “Beans of Hope” farmers.

An external evaluation field visit and observation in to Mary MacKillop Today promoted Vanilla “Beans of Hope” (Livelihood Program) in Railaco, Ermera Municipality during 11 - 15 July 2022 already suggests the need to reorganize Vanilla farming efforts in Railaco, Ermera Municipality in to an important organized rural economic development movement through a proper model - institutional value chain development and support system engaging beyond Vanilla producer farmers only but other key organizational complementing roles to play such as the central and Municipality government entities, private sector and cooperative as well as other business development supports providers priority and commitment in large. Specifically, the project needs to continue to improve the internal organizational capacity and manners of the existing Vanilla producer group; motivate and build their entrepreneurial interest, motivations, skills and knowledge to properly develop the organization of Vanilla farming manners and develop a steady evolutionary processes of Vanilla development from a simply subsistence in to a pre-commercial and commercial level capacity of Vanilla producers investment productivity. Redeveloping a proper producers-based Vanilla value chain development framework that also facilitates the Cooperative-managed business plan and also private sector roles in the Vanilla development industry business plan and system. Promotes an additional and within a shorter period of time of complementing basic income generating opportunities for Vanilla farmers to sustain an intensive vanilla farming investment focus before the Coffee and Vanilla hence, providing a sustainable diversified rural and household economic livelihood potentials.

A continued centralized government financial and decision making system in Timor-Leste still results a significant absence of the Ermera Municipality Agriculture services’ specific institutional and regular financial competency and key human resources strategy and availability to specifically and continuously promote and manage vanilla sector investment plans and growth locally.

Overall, a new consensus is now indispensably needed that will set an overwhelming direction for the Vanilla economy vision for Timor-Leste in order to potentially catalyse and sustain Vanilla production and market quantity and quality standard requirement at the farmers level, promote and facilitate a regular Vanilla farmers organizational support to ensure the entrepreneurial knowledge and technical capacity of farmers to mostly produce the premium quality of Vanilla beans hence, sustaining the overall purpose of Timor-Leste’s Vanilla market industry competitiveness itself. It is recommended that MMT further expands its presence toward another 3 years to continue significant inspiring or motivating roles to encourage a more participation by larger community household in to the project while contributes to reset the overall Vanilla economic vision of Timor-Leste properly.

MMT needs to promote and facilitate a multi-sectoral support and complementary system to develop synergy and project sustainability. An important collaboration must be established immediately with PERMATIL to support Vanilla farmers practicing contour-based water harvesting and conservation technology system to minimize water scarcity problems which regularly affecting farmers interest and

commitment to involve in Vanilla production easily. A contour-based water harvesting and conservation technology system that can be practiced by Vanilla and Coffee producers will help to control run off system to enable a bio-hydrolic system for retaining and reducing the normal flow of underground water filtration process hence increases soil moisture around the Vanilla and coffee plants that will potentially reduce Vanilla plants mortality whenever the plants might not be watered constantly by the farmers.

Specifically, MMT also needs to explore and participate in the “Timor-Leste’s Interministerial Commission for Coordinating the Value Chain and Encouraging Local Production” led by the Cabinet of Prime Minister of Timor-Leste office as a proper central level government platform already to promote multi-sectoral support and complementary strategy. Operationally, the established platform will need to be ensured at the Municipality and village level roles to easy community participation and ownership. A drive towards minimizing any existing key structural support uncertainties vertically and horizontally hence, must be continually ensured and operational to develop Vanilla as a promising green gold potential of Timor-Leste economic growth sector industry.

A continued technical facilitation and improvement and important advocacy shall be emphasized to aware Vanilla farmers to prioritize quality Vanilla production and sale to the market needs. However, a very important investigative Research and Development (R&D) works shall also be needed to improve Vanilla plant’s pest-resistant quality starting already from nursery development stage. Developing an alternative option for Vanilla production inputs requirement such as organic fertilizer and plant protector products can be done to sustain Vanilla productivity and business growth, but it has to continually ensure that it will maintain the organic quality of environmental ecosystem where the Vanilla is growing. Improve Vanilla Beans of Hope” (Livelihood Program) farmers group organizational and management capacity and manners will provide the chances to better develop the productivity of Vanilla farming and is potentially creating a proper and sustainable institutional foundation for Vanilla industry growth in Timor-Leste significantly.

There is important that a properly-established Vanilla farmers resource and knowledge centre should be now created as the rise of Vanilla economy spirit locally and among the rural households farmers is becoming more evident. The center shall be aimed to sustain the investment efforts availing and bringing in a more closer technical knowledge opportunities and information data for Vanilla business environment opportunities in Railaco of the Vanilla “Beans of Hope” (Livelihood Program) terrains. The operational support and functionality of the established Vanilla farmers’ resources and knowledge centre shall be primarily undertaken as part of the roles of FBOs and members of the intended “Train the Trainers” component for the project sustainability plans.

The Vanilla “Beans of Hope” farmers must be able to produce and sell a more premium grades quality and quantity Vanilla beans only, however, in order to make this sustainably practical, Vanilla farmers need to be individually and institutionally motivated, committed and facilitated.

The Vanilla “Beans of Hope” now has the experience and capacity to also promote community-based value adding industry of Vanilla and a sustainable rural-based vanilla village eco-tourism activity. However, in making this to happen easily MMT needs to apply a strategic entry and through an initial important consultation with the Vanilla farmers, relevant stakeholders and with Railaco Community in large.

## II. EVALUATION PURPOSE, OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

The evaluation is intended to assess the overall management and structure of the project over the last 3 years, particularly focusing on the potential for the project to be owned by local people and for benefits to continue after Mary MacKillop Today exits. Specifically, Consultant has able to assess and understand specific roles and time investment of farmers (both female and male) in regular Vanilla farming activity; typical and model institutional support available for the farmers and the project staff; the degree of financial investment commitment by the farmers and relevant multi-sectoral institutional support; key Issues, Challenges and Risks in Vanilla farming and business investment opportunities and system, and the final output and marketing system, issues and income returns.

Mary MacKillop Today has specifically aimed this evaluation has a special attention to assessing the following focus:

- **Effectiveness** – evaluate the extent to which the intended project outcomes are achieved, citing concrete evidence and case studies, assessing the effectiveness of strategies and implementation of interventions and the quality of the partnerships with key stakeholders, identify any gaps, and provide recommendations to improve the project.
- **Impact** – identify evidence of impact within the target groups; evidence of positive changes in Knowledge, Attitude and Practices among the relevant stakeholders in developing a vanilla industry among local farmers and generating significant additional household income for project participants.
- **Sustainability** – the extent to which outcomes of the project can be continued based on the built capacity of target groups, stakeholders, government partners at various levels, and Mary MacKillop Today Timor-Leste. This should take into consideration the financial, individual and organizational capacities and provide specific, actionable, and practical recommendations to focus on during the next phase of the project, looking to long-term sustainability for the project beyond MMT’s involvement.

Following the assessment, analyse alternative directions this program could take moving forward and provide specific, actionable, and practical recommendations for the next phase, focusing on long-term sustainability for the project and the vanilla farmers.

## Scope of work

Based on the agreed evaluation plans and methodology the field visit for the project evaluation data collection was already done during a 5 working days in 7 sub-villages within all 5 villages of Railaco Sub-district of Ermera Municipality where the Mary MacKillop Today implements Vanilla “Beans of Hope” (Livelihood Program). The field visit evaluation works was facilitated by 2 staff of Mary MacKillop Today’s FBOs and also supports from Mary MacKillop Today Timor-Leste office Country Director, Program Manager, Learning & Effectiveness/MEL Manager and Livelihood Program Coordinator.

Data collection has been done through organized series of 28 KIIs and 9 FGDs in all 5 villages of the project location, project FBOs, MMT senior staff at Dili and Sidney office and from ERFA office. More KIIs was done during required direct observation to vanilla farm sites already. At the end Consultant has able to interview 30 individual KII respondents and 9 groups of Focus Discussion Groups (FGDs) participants involved a total of 67 people participants consist of **35 Male participants** (52%) and **32 Female participants** (48%).

This evaluation was covering the whole project and implementation period from July 2019 to June 2022.

## III. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The Consultant has previously consulted various relevant secondary data related with Vanilla project. The project report data and references was provided by the Mary MacKillop Today office in Sidney and in Dili provided such a significant background information regarding the Vanilla “Beans of Hope” (Livelihood Program) details hence, allowing the Consultant to refine Evaluation Methodology and plans.

Field evaluation visit to Railaco was ultimately realized after the approval of the final Evaluation Methodology and inception plans presented to the MMT team. Field evaluation data included qualitative data and semi-quantitative through key informant interviews (KIIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs) sessions to answer and confirm a range of questions correlated to the established scope and purposes of this evaluation work. During the works in Railako, Consultant was allowed to lodge in the MMT field based common house and was easily coordinating the works with the project FBOs and also for conducting 2 KIIs with potential resources persons who had agreed to be met at the MMT field based common house site instead. As agreed already with Mary MacKillop Today in Dili office, the evaluation field data collection was undertaken during 11 until 16 July 2022 already.

Most of in-person KIIs interaction in Railaco were arranged or coordinated in advance through the help of Mary MacKillop Today Timor-Leste project FBOs, while KIIs with Dili-based resources persons were organized directly by the Consultant. All KII and FGD questions used already prepared by Consultant and were approved by the MMT office in advance before their uses, and as indicated in this project evaluation Terms of Reference already, key participants in the primary data collection shall include key sampling respondents representative selected from 494 active vanilla farmers within 27 vanilla farmer groups across 5 villages and 16 Sub-

villages where Vanilla production locate. All KII and FGD interactions was held comfortably in Tetum without a required verbal translation in to Mambae dialect as previously predicted by the Consultant.

At the end of the evaluation field data collection works the sampling categories and size is presented in the following table 1 and Table 2 without a minor adjustment made during the works undertaken in the field compared to the one previously planned already.

**Table 1:** KIIs sampling size by Category

No	Category Description	Total person per Village Category	Size by Sex category		Total Village Covered	Total sampling size	Results
			F	M			
1	Vanilla Individual Producer farmers in - <b>Railaco Kraik</b> village	2	1	1	1	2	1 KII in Sobreque and 1 KK in Cocoa already
2	Vanilla Individual Producer farmers in - <b>Samalete</b> village	2		2	1	2	1 KII in Leburema and 1 KII in Darulete
3	Vanilla Individual Producer farmers in <b>Taraço</b> village	1		1	1	1	1 KII in Datuleo
4	<b>Laqueqo</b> - <b>Taraço</b> village	2	1	1	1	2	Interviewed 1 Adult - Male farmer and 1 Youth - Male Vanilla farmer
5	Ermera Municipality MAF Head	2		2		2	
6	Railaco Village MAF Extension worker	1				1	
7	Village Chiefs	1		3	3	3	Undertaken Virtually
9	MAF Dili	3		3		3	

	office - National Director of Plantas Industriais e Cafe						
11	State Secretary of Cooperatives (Dili)	1		1		1	
12	Head Department of IADE	1		1		1	
13	Private Sector company	1		1		1	
14	Field Based Officer (FBO) of Vanilla "Beans of Hope" project	2		2		2	
15	Mary MacKillop Today Timor- Leste senior staff coordinating the project	3	2	1		3	
16	Mary MacKillop Today Sidney office	4	4			4	
17	Edmund Rice Foundation Australia	1	1			1	
18	Cooperative implementing Vanilla project, (CPMS and BEHAFU)	2	1	1		2	
	<b>TOTAL KIs sampling Size</b>		<b>10</b>	<b>20</b>		<b>30</b>	

**Table 2:** FGDs sampling size by Category

No	Category Description	Total Person by Villages	Size by Sex		Total		Remarks
			M	F	Village required	Sampling	
1	Adult-Male Vanilla producers and sales farmers in <b>Sobrequeque - Railaco Kraik</b> village	5	5	0	1	5	
2	Adult-Female Vanilla producers and sales farmers in <b>Bohometa - Deleço</b> village	5		4	1	4	
3	Adult-Male Vanilla producers and sales farmers in <b>Bohometa - Deleço</b> village	5	5		1	5	
4	Youth-Female Vanilla producers farmers in <b>Bohemata-Deleço</b> village	5		5	1	5	
5	Youth-Female Vanilla producers and sales farmers in <b>Cocoa-Railaco kraik</b> village	5		5	1	5	
6	Youth-Male Vanilla producers and sales farmers in <b>Datuleo - Taraço</b> village	5	5	0	1	5	
7	Vanilla producers groups leaders representatives (Group Coordinator,	3		2	1	2	

	Secretary or Finance person) in <b>Bohemata-Deleço</b> village						
8	Vanilla producers groups leaders representatives (Group Coordinator, Secretary or Finance person) in <b>Cocoa - Railaco Kraik</b> village	3		3	1	3	
9	Vanilla producers groups leaders representatives (Group Coordinator, Secretary or Finance person) in <b>Aiurlala - Samalete</b> village	3		3	1	3	
	<b>TOTAL FGD Participants</b>		<b>15</b>	<b>22</b>		<b>37</b>	

Each KII session was conducted during a 60 minutes duration only, while each FGD session was conducted during an approximate ~75 - 90minutes duration only.

#### **a. Observations and Individual Experiences captures**

Apart from organized KIIs and FGDs Consultant also conducted informal field observation in to 5 individual vanilla farms where the owners had either participated already in KII or FGD session previously. Observation was intended to directly observe the current states of development of Vanilla farming activities e.g. Vanilla growing farms sites and size, care and management practices while a most importantly to confirm and compare whatever any key data and information told or collected during previously conducted KII or FGD sessions already. Observation was also made in to one individual Vanilla producer outside the Vanilla “Beans of Hope” project, but production was not as intensive and with the same quantity as the Vanilla “Beans of Hope” project’s beneficiaries have. In Bohemata Consultant specifically observed how organic fertilizer materials were treated and applied in to the plant basement, while in Darulete Consultant observed an innovative way of using Vanilla climbing pole different from the other

farmer choice. Observation made have confirmed whatever information and data collected during KII or FGD already and hence provided important data for data analysis already.

Consultant had never encountered any Vanilla sale by the Vanilla “Beans of Hope” farmers in Railaco and Gleno market places observed, nor found any sale by other Vanilla producers outside the Vanilla “Beans of Hope” farmers might had been sold in the same markets already. During KII and FGD sessions most of the Vanilla “Beans of Hope” farmers confirmed to have always sold their Vanilla beans directly to CCT and Dili Vanilla only.

Subsequently, in Dili, Consultant found Vanilla Beans sold at the MAF’s organized Loja dos Agricultores (Farmers Shop) in Dili at \$10/bunch consisting of 5 mixed sizes of dried Vanilla beans packaged with transparent plastic wrapping materials, however, as I asked a more details to the sale person inside the shop He simply did not provide additional information about the origins of Vanilla beans and their supply consistency which the Consultant needed. The Consultant also never had a chance to visit any existing Vanilla processing factory during evaluation period already due to a lack of own information about any operating Vanilla processing factory existence already.

## **b. Trials and Revision of Evaluation Methodology**

Consultant and the project team in Railaco have used the first FGD and KII session held in Sobrequeque and Reamory sub-villages of Railaco-Kraik village on the first day of in-field evaluation data collection exercise already as a trials KII and FGD in order to confirm relevance of Evaluation tools being used. The trials helped both Consultant and the project FBOs to refine and modify some of the KII and FGD guides questions focusing on the objectives and purposes of the evaluation.

## **c. KIIs and FGDs Participants’ Entry and Participation Strategy**

As with the previous KIIs and FGDs in the past already, Consultant also allowed a more considerable time for each individual KII and FGD participant to freely express what S/he had to say. There was never being any attempt to mix Wife and her Husband during a FGD or KII session, nor mixing elders and youngest in one groups to avoid domination and the feeling of inferiority by the youngest or wife during discussion. At the end of each KII and FGD session Consultant and the FBOs made an important evaluation of the sessions undertaken already to admit correction or changes in the approach and key questions used already. Unfortunately, there was not any formal evaluation using an evaluation forms to be filled by each participating KII or FGD participants as previously planned already. Post KII or FGD session internal-evaluation team was important to clearly evaluate whether the KII or FGD session have importantly collected or received key information needed or not. Also helped to detect whether an individual participant participated or not so a follow-up approach and interview may have to be done further with specific identified participant case.

#### **d. Participants Recruitment**

The eligibility criteria for **Key informant interviews (KIIs)** was that an individual person or institutional organization relates - with the Vanilla “ Beans of Hope” (Livelihood Program) issues, progresses, decision making, expected targets and impacts. The Mary MacKillop Timor-Leste Today project FBOs have all provided the Consultant a list of individual eligible for the KIIs.

During the process Consultant and the project team would inform potential KII participants the objectives of evaluation, introduced them to evaluation consultant, and invite the individual to participate in a Key Informant interview. There was not significantly demanded formalities to be performed by Mary MacKillop Timor-Leste Today office in Dili nor in Ermera Municipality during the field work undertake as the process was simply made by the FBOs through a phone made appoint call only. In Dili Consultant was easily arranging His meeting with government officials KII, NGOs and other stakeholder individual KII appointment needs already. The FBOs have importantly arranged and continue accompanying consultant throughout the whole FGD and KII sessions with MAF’s Ermera Municipality officers and the farmers in large.

Interviews with Village Chiefs were done virtually by the Consultant after obtaining their mobile phones from teh FBOs, as there was not possible to arrange in-person KII during Consultant stay in Railaco already. This was specifically happening as the Chiefs never stayed at the Village Chief office when we expected our meeting and there was also not possible to arrange interview outside the office during our stay period in Railaco already.

The eligibility criteria for **Focus group discussions (FGDs)** was that the participants must meet the requirements of the FGD participant group (i.e. male and female of 18 years of age or older, and active Vanilla producer farmer - direct beneficiary of the Vanilla “ Beans of Hope” (Livelihood Program) in Railaco, Ermera Municipality who would be identified or confirmed by the project FBOs. The FGD participants met the set eligibility criteria already and had never participated in the previous KII session held already except the one considered for a needed follow-up confirmation. Two under 18 years old girls FGD participants had been selected and participated during the FGD held in Bohemata village already, because they were the only childs living with their parents and all involved supporting their mothers in doing household works and watering Vanilla plants regularly after and after their schooling hours.

The privacy of the potential KII and FGD participants were significantly protected throughout the recruitment process as the names of participants have never been collected or shared with any other participants during data collection as part of the applied research ethic already.

A part from KII with Mary Mackillop Sidney office, ERFA office and village chiefs, all KIIs and FGDs in Timor-Leste were done in-person already.

## e. Participant Anonymity Protocol

In the KII and FGDs Consent Script and form stated that all identifying names or status of participants that might have been recorded in the KII or FGD transcripts are excluded from presentations of findings and the report to ensure the anonymity of participants involved in the data collection. So, the Evaluation team conducted KIIs and FGDs had only recorded the title/role and organization and the age of individual interviewed, the date and location, status and numbers of dependents children if the participant has been married already.

Consultant had previously prepared a black Identity Cards and were brought along to each location and used during FGDs. Each Card was given a code number (P1, P2, and so on) to be hanged on their neck each. This was to ensure anonymity of participants. Only the location, participant group name, role, age of participant and date were recorded in notes and on consent forms, as follows:

Example: Suco Taraco - Female-Adult Vanilla Farmers\_16Jul 2022

## f. Evaluation Data Collection Team

The Consultant continually worked as a team with the existing Project FBOs in Railaco; with Mary MacKillop Today Dili office Senior Staff coordinating this project and all the Principal's key project staff from Sidney office. The project's 2 FBOs have significantly assisted in data collection; assist in field KIIs and FGDs appointment, preparation and conducting of KIIs and FGDs sessions. Before leaving some places where a KII or FGDs was held already would be served with coffee and snacks or lunch which previously organized by FBOs in coordination with that particular groups already.

The travels and works in all villages in Railaco used a MMT's project 4WD vehicle with the Mary MacKillop Timor-Leste driver to have made the access and works were easily undertaken already.

Table 2: Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Person Responsible
Lead Consultant, Data Collection, Analyst and writer	Regio da Cruz Salu
Evaluation Assistants and Driver	Pedro Rosa de Jesus, Manuel Borges Sarmento (FBOs) and Nelson Agapito Guterres (Driver)
Municipality Contact Person (s)	Pedro Rosa de Jesus and Manuel Borges Sarmento (FBOs)
Desk Review	Regio da Cruz Salu
Logistics and Scheduling	Mary MacKillop Today Dili office and Consultant
Data Collection	Consultant and Mary MacKillop Today's project FBOs

Report	Consultant
Report Reviewers	Mary MacKillop Today Timor-Leste and Sydney office

## **g. Ethical Issues**

Ethical consideration should include respect of participants opinions, privacy, confidentiality and self-confidence to express opinions and to justify data and important information provided already. Avoid uses of offensive or abusive expressive-languages and words to participants or participants own family including racial and harassment.

Avoided gender biases against women or men when discussing participants experiences and roles in Vanilla and Agriculture development. Respected child protection issues by avoiding any potential risk and harms to accompanying children when father or mother participate in the KII or FGD session. Avoided the presence of husband during adult - female and Youth-female FGDs or KII session to potentially allow women to freely express and share their opinions and experiences confidently. Avoided no harm to any surrounding quality environmental settings or condition visited or lived on during the Evaluation works. Most of KII and FGD sessions were held inside an individual participant's home as had been agreed among them and the FBOs before the visits there.

Importantly, KII and FGD participants Consent Agreement form was always introduced and relayed by interviewer and interviewee representing mutual agreement to obey specific ethical consideration. As a part of the consent process, participants was often asked if they have questions or concerns about the Evaluation or confidentiality at the beginning of session to be started. All participants received the following information prior to commencing their engagement:

- Aim of the Evaluation and methods
- Time needed for interview
- Rights to refuse participation
- Confidentiality of information provided
- No information will be divulged to third parties

Consultant had never been opposed by any KII or FDG participant about any ethical issues as in most of the times each participant consent would be easily stated and denominated on the consent form used.

In principle, the Consultant has signed Mary MacKillop Today's Safeguarding policy and obligation to adhere to the principles, human rights and organization values, rules and regulations of the Ethical norms to guides all safeguarding practices and consideration when undertaking the Vanilla "Beans of Hope" end progress project evaluation.

**Procedure for KIIs:** The Evaluator (Consultant) conducting the interview read out an oral consent script in Tetum to the interviewee. The Evaluator then obtained a

verbal affirmation to confirm understanding of the informed consent from the interviewee. The verbal affirmation by the interviewee was also recorded in the transcript and on the audio recorder that was always brought along with the Consultant.

**Procedure for FGDs:** The Evaluator (Consultant) conducting the FGD read out an oral consent script in Tetum to prospective participants. A verbal affirmation to confirm understanding of the informed consent was sought from each participant in turn and was recorded by the Evaluator in His notes and on the audio recorder that was always brought along with the Consultant.

#### **h. Data Transcription**

All primary data were captured via written or typed notes and on audio recorders using Digital audio recorder or using Mobile phone Audio recorder means already. KIIs were conducted in Tetum, and there were never any requirement for Mambae translation as most of participants speak Tetum. The Consultant and FBOs always reviewed their notes or resumes following each days meetings undertaken no later than by the end of the same day. It was made this way to compare notes and fill in gaps to ensure accuracy and identify any need for follow-up to clarify key points or even modification of KII or FGD guide.

#### **i. Duration of the Evaluation**

The consultant agreed to Mary MacKillop Today's proposed 26 days between 29 June and 8 August 2022 already to carry out the overall Vanilla "Beans of Hope" (Livelihood Program) Evaluation with a final evaluation report submission date of Monday, 8 August 2022. Unfortunately, the submission of draft Evaluation Report was only happening on 10 August 2022 after the delays in the KIIs with Sidney office and ERFA office. The Consultant received and incorporated comments from MMT office and then finally did a final report submission 22 August 2022.

##### **a. Start date & period of implementation**

Within the agreed 26 days of the Vanilla "Beans of Hope" (Livelihood Program) end progress evaluation, Consultant had performed during a following details of timeline already.

<b>No</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Working Days</b>	<b>Date (s)</b>
1	Initial meeting with the project team and Project Document Review	2	29 – 30 June 2022
2	Design and finalize questionnaire/Evaluation tools, plan (Inception Report) and final Approval	4	1, 4 - 6 July 2022

3	Team final preparation / Briefings and Additional Training	1	8 July 2022
4	Data collection KIIs and FGDs in selected sub-villages of project locations in Railaco	6	11 – 16 July 2022
3	Data collection KIIs in Dili Municipality	4	18, 19, 20, 21 July 2022
4	Data Collection KII with Mary MacKillop Today Timor-Leste office senior staff coordinating the project	1	20 and 21 July 2022
5	Data Collection KII with Mary MacKillop Today Sidney office	1	4 August 2022
6	Data Collection KII with Edmund Rice Foundation Australia (ERFA) office	1	9 August 2022
7	Continue Data analysis and report drafting	3	25 July - 8 August 2022
8	Submission of Draft Evaluation Report		10 August 2022
9	Incorporate comments on Draft Evaluation report	3	15 - 19 August 2022
10	Submission of Final Evaluation Report		22 August 2022
	<b>Total</b>	<b>26</b>	

## b. KIIs and FGDs Plans and Itinerary

### b.1 Itinerary Evaluation field visit for (FGD and KII) to Railaco, 11-15 July 2022

No	Day/Date/Year (time)	Location/Site	Activity	Responsible Person
1	<b>Mon, 11 July 2022</b>			<b>Consultancy Team</b>
a	10:00AM - 11:00AM	Drive from Dili to Railaco MMT base office		Regio, Driver
			Internal team preparation, nearby field observation	Regio
b	14:00PM - 15:00PM	Sobrequeque - Railaco Kraik	FGD with Adult - Male from Ergueme group (5 people)	Regio, FBO staff
c	16:00PM - 1700PM	Sobrequeque - Railaco Kraik	KII Adult - Male Vanilla Producer farmer from Reamori group (1 person)	Regio, FBO staff

d	Lunch time, drove to Cocoa Sub-village			Regio, FBO staff, Driver
<b>2</b>	<b>Tues, 12 Jul 2022</b>			
a	08:00AM-09:00AM	Drove to <b>Bohemata - Deleço</b> village		Regio, staff, Driver
b	09:30AM-10:30AM	Bohemata - Deleço	FGD with Youth - Female from Hakbiit group 1 (5 people)	Regio, FBO staff
c	11:00PM-12:00PM	Bohometa - Deleço	FGD with Adult - Male from Hakbiit 2 group (5 people )	Regio, FBO staff
c	12:30PM-13:00PM	Bohometa - Deleço	FGD with Producer organization group leadership reps. from Hakbiit 1 group (2 people )	Regio, FBO staff
d	Lunch time			
e	14:30PM-15:30PM	Cocoa - Railaco Kraik	FGD with Youth - Female from GHHB group (5 people)	Regio, FBO staff
f	16:00PM-17:30PM	Cocoa - Railaco Kraik	KII Adult - Female Vanilla Producer farmer (1 person)	Regio, FBO staff
g	18:00PM-19:00PM	Returned to MMT Base in Railaco		Regio, FBOs staff, Driver
<b>3</b>	<b>Wed, 13 Jul 2022</b>			
a	07:30AM-08:30AM	Drove to Datuleo - Taraço		Regio, FBOs staff, Driver
b	09:30AM-10:30AM	Datuleo - Taraço	FGD with Youth - Male Vanilla producer farmers from Grupo Datuleo (5 people)	Regio, FBOs
c	11:00PM-12:30PM	Datuleo - Taraço	KII with Adult- Male Vanilla Producer farmer from Datuleo Group 2 (1 person)	Regio, FBOs
d	Lunch time			
e	08:30AM-09:30AM	Drove to <b>Leburema - Samalete village</b>		Regio, FBO staff, Driver
f	09:00AM-10:00AM	Leburema-Samalete	KII with Adult-Male Vanilla Producer farmer (1 people)	Regio

g	13:00PM-14:30PM	Aiurlala - Samalete	FGD with Producer organization group leadership reps. from Aiurlala (3 people)	Regio, FBO staff
h	16:00PM-17:30PM	Darema-Railaco-Leten	Direct observation	Regio, FBO staff
<b>4</b>	<b>Thurs, 14 Jul 2022</b>			
a	08:30AM-09:30AM	BEHAFU Cooperative office	KII Adult-Female with President of BEHAFU Cooperatives	
b	10:30AM-11:30AM	Drove to <b>Fatuqueiro - Gleno</b>		Regio, FBO staff, Driver
c	12:00PM-13:00PM	MAF office at Fatuqueiro - Gleno	KIIs with Ermera MAF Director and Head of Unit for Coffee and Commercial Agroforestry	Regio, FBO staff
d	<i>Lunch time</i>	<i>Gleno</i>		<i>Regio, FBO staffs, MAF officials, Driver</i>
e	14:30PM-15:00PM	Gleno Market	Market Observation	Regio
f	15:30PM-16:30PM	Drove back to MMTBase office in Railaco		Regio, FBO staff, Driver
g	17:00PM-18:30PM		Returned to Dili to attend an invitation for official ceremony with USAID at USA Embassy	Regio, Driver
<b>5</b>	<b>Friday, 15 Jul 2022</b>			
a	11:00AM-12:00PM	Traveled from Dili - MMTBase office in Railaco		Regio, Driver
a	14:00PM-14:45PM	Drove to <b>Derulete- Samalete</b> village		Regio, FBO staff, Driver
b	15:00PM-16:00PM	Darulete - Samalete	KII with Individual Youth-Male Vanilla producer	Regio, FBO staff
c	16:30PM-18:30PM	Returned to MMT Base office in Railaco and proceeded to Dili		Regio, Driver

## b.2 Itinerary Evaluation KIIs in Dili

No	Day/Date/Year (time)	Location/Site	Activity	Responsible Person
1	<b>Monday, 18 July 2022</b>			<b>Consultancy Team</b>
a	10:00AM-11:00AM	Dili	KII with State Secretary of SECoop	Regio
2	<b>Monday, 25 July 2022</b>			<b>Consultancy Team</b>
a	09:00AM-10:00AM	MMT Office Dili	KII with MMT's Livelihood Program Coordinator	Regio
b	12:00PM-13:00PM	Dili	Lunch meeting KII with National Director and staff from National Directorate of Coffee and Commercial Agroforestry	Regio
3	<b>Friday, 29 July 2022</b>			<b>Consultancy Team</b>
a	11:00AM-11:30AM	Dili	Virtual KII with IADE - Head Department of Training	Regio
b	14:00PM-14:30PM	Dili	Observation and KII with Loja dos Agricultores in Comoro on Vanilla sales	Regio
3	<b>Monday - Tuesday, 1 - 2 August 2022</b>			<b>Consultancy Team</b>
a		Dili	Via email communication with MMT Program Manager re KII question and answers	Regio

### b.3 Itinerary Evaluation KII with Mary MacKillop Sydney office

No	Day/Date/Year (time)	Location/Site	Activity	Responsible Person
1	<b>Thursday, 4 August 2022</b>			<b>Consultancy Team</b>
a	14:00PM- 15:00PM	Dili (Virtual)	Via Team KII meeting with Mary MacKillop Sidney office	Regio

### b.4 Itinerary Evaluation KII with Edmund Rice office

No	Day/Date/Year (time)	Location/Site	Activity	Responsible Person
1	<b>Monday, 8 August 2022</b>			<b>Consultancy Team</b>
a	13:00PM- 13:30PM	Dili (Virtual)	Via Team KII meeting with Edmund Rice office	Regio

## IV. FINDINGS

### 4.1 Poverty and Rural Development Context

In May 2022 Timor-Leste has celebrated its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the restoration of independence after the UNAMET - organized Referendum in 1999 which ultimately ended the long process of becoming an independent country. These days, the government is undertaking a series of Municipality level public consultation meetings in the process of revising the second-10 years of National Strategic Development Plans that sets Timor-Leste national development goals and vision for 2030. The last decade has witnessed a lot of infrastructure development in the country starting with National electrification, Roads, Ports and other infrastructure development investment mega-projects and Timor-Leste is trying to secure its membership within the ASEAN to join the great ASEAN Economic Community.

A two-third of Timor-Leste population lives in rural areas and mostly dependent on subsistence farming economy (Lao Hamutuk, 2022), and overall, Timor-Leste is yet easily making a steady progress on its non-oil economic development growth sectors within the last 20 years already while the country is continuously almost fully depending its development financing from its sovereign fund which have mostly sourced from its oil and gas revenues only.

Rural poverty in Timor-Leste is continually multifaceted from the areas of human, governance, livelihood and infrastructure. Basic health hygiene and sanitation and nutrition issues continue to dominate in the most social problems and poverty in rural areas, while quality of basic education, basic infrastructure improvement and rural livelihood and economic growth are continually unease progresses or change during the last 20 years already have been predominantly caused by a continued degree of limited key human resources support, disproportionate financial investment prioritization by the government, and unsustainable rural development institutional capacity and support. Regardless of if any Timor-Leste rural area is in a possession of potential economic development resources but lack of Human resources capacity factor specifically the lack of entrepreneurial knowledge and skill and also cognizance of individual farmers and family has contributed significantly to continued less development innovation and rural poverty in the rural areas.

These days the trends of urbanization of young population from rural areas into the urban areas mainly Dili the capital city of Timor-Leste is very significant in the pursuing of quality formal education, formal employment opportunities in infrastructure development and services. However, due to limited opportunities which the urban areas can provide already, it has also become an alarming phenomenon already that a very significant percentage of Timor-Leste young people decided and continually emigrated to European continent countries for better employment opportunities which they are easily absorbed. A lots of Timor-Leste young people also participated and benefited from the government's facilitated seasonal worker program into overseas countries in particularly Australia and South Korea has become the only organized employment opportunities by the government's SEFOPE for Timor-Leste young people to

obtain better employment opportunity overseas nowadays. As of 31 December 2021, there have been a total of 5,063 Timor-Leste young people seasonal migrant workers, consisted of 1,409 female and 3,654 male, that SEFOPE sent to Australia since 2012<sup>3</sup> already, and also considering the numbers of Timorese migrant workers in other overseas countries such as Great Britain and North Ireland have continually provided significant remittances at an estimated to be around US\$5 million per annum or around 1.4% since 2006 non-oil GDP income (estimated at US\$356 million) already<sup>4</sup> and continuously increased at an average annual rate of 151.52% reaching 397 million US dollars in 2020 already<sup>5</sup>. To the end, this trend shall be positively providing a new opportunity for Timor-Leste domestic employment potential capacity when the migrant workers will have continually returned with their important employment skills and manners to be reintegrated in to a potentially promoted key economic growth sector development investment opportunities in the Timor-Leste future similarly in Agriculture and services industry which most of the Timor-Leste current migrant workers continually engaged with. Positively, this trend will also contribute to the development of competitive advantages of the Timorese future workforce within the new ASEAN economic community era after Timor-Leste has secured its membership with the ASEAN organization.

Within the last decade already Timor-Leste government is repeatedly recognizing Ermera being number one Municipality with a highest Malnutrition problem identified by the prevalence of stunting, wasting and underweight among children (0 to 59 months). Malnutrition is primarily being caused by household food insecurity and a lack of knowledge and understanding around health and nutrition. In Timor-Leste, the context of nutrition and food security is strongly related to the subsistence farming<sup>6</sup>. The government also considering Oé-cusse Ambeno, the enclave region of Timor-Leste within Indonesia and also Ainaro Municipality being the second and third areas having the highest malnutrition problems in Timor-Leste as well, but in the reality confirms that such a common typical malnutrition problems including Tuberculosis, stunting and underweight of children under 5 of age also continuously predominates in the overall Municipalities of Timor-Leste as well. While the same issues also similarly observed in all five villages of the Vanilla “Beans of Hope” (Livelihood Program) location, the expected progresses and impact of the project shall have the potential to drive the changes which ultimately reduce malnutrition and poverty.

The majority of Vanilla “Beans of Hope” (Livelihood Program) location villages roads accessibility is still also difficult to regularly connect farmers and market easily. Topographically, all Vanilla “Bean of Hope” project locations are sloppy and rugged terrain makes difficult to Vanilla buyers from urban area easily accessing Vanilla producing villages to buy readily sold vanilla beans or other produced horticulture and livestock products. Lack of normal public transportation access in to these villages preventing vanilla farmers to access market in town whenever they need to buy required inputs or basic needs. Significantly, this typical topographical condition is often preventing individual Vanilla production farm site

<sup>3</sup> Labour Market Outlook Timor-Leste 2001, Edition 11, Pag:12

<sup>4</sup> Leveraging Remittances with Microfinance: Timor Leste Country Report (2007), Pag: 4

<sup>5</sup> [https://knoema.com/atlas/Timor-Leste/topics/Economy/Balance-of-Payments-Current-accounts/Personal remittances, paid, 1960-2021 - knoema.com](https://knoema.com/atlas/Timor-Leste/topics/Economy/Balance-of-Payments-Current-accounts/Personal%20remittances%20paid%201960-2021-knoema.com)

<sup>6</sup> [Timor Leste Village Poultry Health and Biosecurity Program - DAFF \(agriculture.gov.au\)](#)

to be expanded in to a new location away far from surrounding house or nearby farm site which will in return creates difficulty for undertaking regular intensive Vanilla production cares in particularly by the wife and girls when the husbands and boys will not often be around.

Rural Road rehabilitation and maintenance program was significantly implemented through a joint-Timor-Leste government and Australian government funded R4D program implemented by ILO since 2012<sup>7</sup> have not been easily able to improve the overall 3000km of rural road condition in Timor-Leste already. Similarly is also observed that the ongoing joint-Timor-Leste government and Australia Government funded Timor-Leste's government program initiative called PNDS through the Ministry of State Administration and the Ministry of Finance Timor-Lestes since 2012<sup>8</sup> is also on the progress of improving rural road connectivity and access in some of the Vanilla "Beans of Hope" (Livelihood Program) location already but have not been maximum and is significantly expected to continue receive prioritization in the coming financial years of PNDS.

Water shortages issues is impeding new farmers to be involved immediately in Vanilla planting nor the existing Vanilla producers already expanding the size of their Vanilla production area easily. Mostly, all Vanilla farm sites observed do not in a possession of permanent water connectivity and distribution system already which often forced wife and children to daily collecting water from a quite distance of water sources using jerrycans or other light buckets to bring back water for household cooking, bathing and washing and watering of vanilla and other grown plants such as vegetables. Due to a limited volumes of water within the passing by government's built piping system, Vanilla producers in the village of Deleço are reluctant to connect their hoses or pipes for Vanilla growing uses in order to avoid any conflict might be caused against other non-Vanilla growers potentially when they might feel and find that the act has reduced water in to their houses.

This appears clearly that Vanilla plants would receive less water irrigation needs daily which often caused the death of planted vanilla already would significantly demoralizing the commitment of individual subsistence vanilla farmers to continuously invest their significant times for vanilla growing.

Water shortage limits women role in Vanilla production and contributes to increased basic hygiene health and sanitation problems within Vanilla farmers households family. It was observed that the vast majority of Vanilla "Beans of Hope" (Livelihood Program) growers families daily collect water from nearby spring water fountain or stream that may dry out before the next rainy season already. Only a small numbers of individual vanilla grower village were found to have connected galvanized or polypipes or plastic hose from the nearby springs or in to the passing by piping system already probably installed by PNDS or another subsidized project previously. These families would have been able to connect their distribution pipes or plastic hoses to the nearby vanilla plants otherwise they would have practically let the connected pipe or hose be continuously daily filling the widen buckets or muddying the surface only. So far, there is no proper watering system for Vanilla plants at the majority of Vanilla "Beans of Hope" individual

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<sup>7</sup> [https://www.ilo.org/jakarta/whatwedo/projects/WCMC\\_18467/langs--eng/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/jakarta/whatwedo/projects/WCMC_18467/langs--eng/index.htm)

<sup>8</sup> [www.pnds.gov.tl/website/about-pnds/](http://www.pnds.gov.tl/website/about-pnds/)

farmer confirming that most of our Vanilla farming industry is continually still far from intensive system already.

Potentially, the degree of different weather and climactic environment of Ermera Municipality is not only favourable for a sustainable horticulture and agroforestry development but also for a sustainable rural agritourism industry potential which can be initiated already within the ongoing project component wise to specifically promote a community-managed Vanilla-village tourism development opportunities. So far, a significant initiative to develop the foundation of future community-managed Vanilla-village tourism development in Railaco has been promoted through Card-making project being conducted in partnership with Gregory Terrace and the Timor Terrace Network with the BEHAFU Cooperative women members to organize locally-made Post-Card production and business which needs to be continually motivated or promoted as part of the existing Vanilla 'Beans of Hope' (livelihood program) reorganization.

Rural-based institutions have basically included village councils who play a leadership role within village development supports decision making role. Catechist or Pastor as representative of Church Council in the village and sub-village level also play significant roles to ensure that rural families and community members embraces peace and solidarity based on the Church and Christianity values - their roles contribute shall be spreading the messages during regular Sunday Masses' in the chapel or during regular annual - the Holy Mary - visit to every households gathering where the Catechist or Pastor can also use the momentum to spread the same messages about the Church and Christian values on family's social solidarity and economic prosperity.

Government structure does not exist until village level in Timor-Leste so the roles of elected members of Village Council and community management team under the PNDS plays a significant roles for motivating and mobilizing community development planning and better project management practices for directly government-funded PNDS projects. The core key management team membership include an important element of planning and monitoring and evaluation by the Planning and Accountability Commission (KPA) which is responsible for general oversight and monitoring of PNDS activities and in ensuring effective community participation by all members of the community.

Unfortunately, at the community level the priorities decided democratically by Village Community members to approve the new project priority for PNDS funding are continually dominated by rural infrastructure development priorities and is neglecting to prioritize the promotion of community-based agriculture development investment initiatives. A key advocacy message and support need to be provided to community, the Ministry of State Administration and PNDS office to rethink village development investment priority for PNDS funding shall also target agriculture investment priority as well.

Overall, the active roles of village council are important to support and manage village institutional support and roles. This evaluation still observed a significant gap with regards to the role of village councils within the Vanilla "Beans of Hope" project location to ensure community organization and mobilization support. It

hence suggests an intensive and continued capacity building for village council members including Village Chiefs and Sub-Village Chiefs, Delegado and Delegada, youth female and youth male representative in the village council in the area of community-driven development planning and management strategy, creative economy and rural-based SME development strategy shall be potentially placing Village Chiefs and Sub-Village Chiefs in the frontline of village community entrepreneurial skills motivation and mobilization supporting roles.

The village savings and loans groups movement has become an important phenomenon in Timor-Leste and potentially serves as another key impetus for the village-based institution facilitating the process of community-based financial capacity which has been seen contributing significantly to poverty reduction strategy. The evaluation found and was confirmed that the percentage of the existing Vanilla “Beans of Hope” project farmers practising and benefited their families from savings and loans activity is continuously growing and there is a need to continue encourage all Vanilla producer groups practising savings and loans and improved their organizational and financial management capacity and manners. Additionally, it was also confirmed during organized Focus Group Discussions that a tendency of individual group members to have never used the money received from their group savings and loans to finance specific investment needs for Vanilla production or business is significant. Now as there is a continued needs to better encourage all Vanilla growers in to the Vanilla producer groups’ savings and loan scheme, it is also significantly required to encourage the reinvestment of groups’ savings and loan to facilitate Vanilla or other complementary income-generating investment activities.

## **4.2 An Analysis on the Project Rationale and Approached based on the OECD DAC Criteria**

### **a. Project Relevance**

Primarily, the intervention of Mary MacKillop Today for the continuation of the Vanilla Beans of Hope” (Livelihood Program) was substantially promising the future specific Vanilla economy growth potential for Timor-Leste as the extent of technical and organizational capacity of the Vanilla producers and all involved complementary efforts and processes are continually being improved and operates in a more synergistic way. This project aims to strengthen the diversification of rural economy capacity in Ermera Municipality hence contributes to reduce the highest malnutrition problem differs from other Municipalities in Timor-Leste. More specifically, the intervention and continued efforts have also been creating a more advanced step already an important foundation for the government leadership role and policy of the recently established Interministerial Commission for Coordinating the Value Chain and Encouraging Local Production focus will be towards promoting Vanilla economy investment value chain strategy for Timor-Leste.

The Vanilla “Beans of Hope” (Livelihood Program) objectives are rationally designed and has been continuously motivating Railaco subsistence farmers in Vanilla business opportunities, knowledge and skills to diversify their livelihood opportunity amid the global coffee market fluctuation impact and also general

poverty problems affecting rural families in Timor-Leste. Complements to succeed the existing important government policies on improved food security to reduce poverty and malnutrition of the people in Ermera Municipality specifically. It is a more result-based oriented intervention project approach.

The evaluation found that while there is a need to continue organize institutional capacity of the Vanilla producers organization, the technical skill trainings on Vanilla production which the project FBOs have regularly provided to individual Vanilla producers are technically relevant and were confirmed positive by all interviewed Vanilla farmers already.

b. Project Coherences.

Even though the MAF has not specifically owned a definite policy and strategic framework on Vanilla, but the Vanilla “Beans of Hope” (Livelihood Program) has been significantly a prioritized MMT strategy and also a Timor-Leste National Development Strategic Plans (2011 - 2030) priority already. The National Development Strategic Plan recommends to promote the intercropping of coffee and Vanilla to promote production and export of these niche products to high-value markets hence, significantly promoted by the Vanilla “Beans of Hope” (Livelihood Program) progressively.

c. Project effectiveness

The Vanilla “beans of Hope” project has significantly worked with Vanilla producer groups and continuously encourages more membership of Vanilla producer groups. In Railaco-kraik village number of families located close to water sources increased in Vanilla production compared with those living away from the water sources, hence is advised that the next phase of this project encourage more families located close to water sources to engage in Vanilla farming.

The next phase of the project is aimed to significantly consolidate the establishment of the Cooperative, sustainable income generation and skills building for vanilla group leaders and other members institutionally able to organize and manage Vanilla productivity and market sustainably.

d. Project Efficiency

Even though MMT only employs 2 FBOs for the project, however, they have been progressively serving as important catalyst for the project organization functioning and positive impact so far. The evaluation found and able to confirm that the 2 FBOs have significantly coordinated the project with village Authorities for community mobilization and participation. They have been found as successful in improving basic technical knowledge of individual Vanilla producers in Vanilla planting and pollination techniques easily, in preparing and applying organic fertilizers and pesticides without any financial support from the project already. Observation and discussion with the project FBOs confirmed the successful establishment of two significant model - Vanilla farms applying the best practices of Vanilla production techniques and management in Deleço

village which have been continuously used to inspire and guides other farmer progresses as well.

Additionally, with the “Train the Trainer” Initiative which the MMT plans to achieve and also expected multisectoral complementary and support to be assured, the Vanilla “Beans of Hope” shall be implementing a more efficiently to achieve its goals and objective significantly.

Most of Vanilla production inputs includes production and application of organic compost and also organic pesticides materials which have been locally available to be collected and used only. There is no requirement and dependency for non-organic inputs materials as it is forbidden and costly.

Socio-culturally, Railaco community are also receptive of innovation and changes have significantly facilitated the project inception and progresses made already, making the roles of limited numbers of project FBOs is a non-contradictory.

e. Project Impact

The “Beans of Hope” (Livelihood Program) is more a community-driven development project approach by the fact that it does not initiate as a community incentive project delivery as compared to government’s subsidized effort financed under the Public Transfer system already. In the Vanilla “Beans of Hope” (Livelihood Program), the project only initiated the effort of its beneficiaries by giving up 5 - 30 vanilla plants only at the beginning of each beneficiary’s engagement however, since ever, numbers of the plants have been multiplied by own initiative of all individual project beneficiaries to reach the average of 180 plants or more already.

Importantly, the adoption by the project beneficiaries have been consistently encouraged by economic benefits and by the state improvement in basic knowledge and skills of each project beneficiaries in Vanilla farming techniques already as a result of training attended, coaching and regular supervision by the project FBOs in particular.

The Vanilla “Beans of Hope” (Livelihood Program) continually raises the the great awareness of community and provides them the opportunity to generate significant economic income better than coffee market price. Since MAF’s Ermera Municipality office is continuously under-resourced to significantly performs its leading roles in Coffee, Vanilla and other agribusiness investment potential, the Vanilla “Beans of Hope” (Livelihood Program) has been providing the opportunity and potentials to legitimate MAF’s Ermera Municipality specific investment decision making roles and competency in the future Municipality government decision making responsibility.

f. Project Sustainability

The Vanilla “Beans of Hope” (Livelihood Program) is well placed to promote the vision for vanilla and economic development in the country. Its intervention has

the potential to sustain Railaco community interest and benefits in the potential Vanilla industry growth due their own inspiration and confidence already, and whatever aspects of vanilla farmers organizational and management capacity to be improved still as recommended by the Consultant in this report already is aimed basically to systematize Vanilla “Beans of Hope” institutional development and supports needed.

Vanilla is the second development investment priority by MAF’s Ermera Municipality Department aside from Coffee, however, institutionally MAF’s Ermera office is continually under-resourced in terms of financial and human resources to promote vanilla investment industry. The Vanilla “Beans of Hope” hence will have set the important platform and case study of Vanilla Value Chain Development purposes of MAF’s Ermera Municipality Department and also the existing Timor-Leste central government interministerial Commission platform already, which importantly the MMT needs to approach and build synergy with as part of the Vanilla “Beans of Hope” (Livelihood Program) exit strategy need. It is believed that when the synergies with the existing interministerial platform is built already it will sustainably promote Vanilla farmers institutional growth and market value chain development functioning.

#### **4.3 Issues and Gaps in the Vanilla “Beans of Hope” (Livelihood Program), 2018 - 2022**

The Vanilla “Beans of Hope” project was initiated with a five-year plan to develop a vanilla industry among local farmers and generate significant additional household income for project participants. Growing vanilla presents a significant earning opportunity for existing coffee growers (even for small scale farmers). Since 2015, the project has been supported by two Field Based Officers (FBOs), however, the evaluation assessed and argues that the complexity of rural community development awareness and mobilization works require more than the project’s FBOs facilitating roles but a more complementary efforts important elements of community and rural development which include the government - MAF specialized extension worker intensive technical support; the more functions of interested vanilla grower “train the trainers” selected team support and also the obligation of village council members. The Vanilla “Beans of Hope” project has been funded by Edmund Rice Foundation Australia (ERFA) since 2006 in 5 villages in the Ermera Municipality, Railaco-Kraik, Railaco-Leten, Samalete, Deleço and Taraço and in a consultation made with ERFA office advised that ERFA needs to be considered for more partnership roles to the project rather than a simply funding provider roles .

Implementation of this project was handed over from the Christian Brothers to Mary MacKillop Today with a total of 47 vanilla farmers in 2018. Numbers have since increased to 665 vanilla farmers being formed into 27 vanilla farmer groups across 5 villages. Currently 494 vanilla farmers are actively involved in the project and are cultivating vanilla. Around 50 vanilla farmers have already sold their vanilla to the local market mainly to Dili Vanilla company and CCT. As of the end of June 2022 report indicates that 6,019 vines of Vanilla have been planted at the land of Vanilla farmers and this numbers needs to be increased to reach business industry quantity level. Normally, it can take up to 3-5 years for plants to mature

and fruit ready for harvest, however, with an appropriate and intensive technical know-how treatment the Vanilla plants may grow the mature fruit within 18 or 24 months already. The project team collaborates closely with the Secretary of State for Cooperatives (SECoop), Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MAP) and engages with local vanilla companies who purchase and process the vanilla.

Mary MacKillop Today is working towards withdrawing from the project and exiting by June 2024, with the expectation that agencies such as MAF, SECoop and Institute for Business Development Support (IADE) will support the vanilla farmers post exit. The current focus of the project is to build the vanilla farmers' capacity to establish and successfully manage a cooperative as a steppingstone to their independence from Mary MacKillop Today. Activities range from leadership and group management training to technical farming practices, literacy and numeracy and a new "Train-the-Trainer" initiative. No new participants are being accepted at this stage. In FY21-22 a Multi-Sectoral Cooperative was established, and a Savings and Loans group will establish a new Cooperative in Year 1 of the new project cycle. Disaster risk reduction initiatives will be included in the new design. The project is based in five villages of the Railaco Administrative Posting of Ermera Municipality.

The end of project evaluation is expected to inform the exit plan for the next phase out period of July 2022 - June 2024. It is considered important to consolidate the establishment of the Cooperative, sustainable income generation and skills building for vanilla group leaders and other members. The phase out period will require intensive support, oversight, and consolidation of organisational and human resources. In addition, integration of Cooperative activities is a new experience for the vanilla farmers therefore they will have to adjust and learn new skills from the livelihood team and government officials.

The evaluation work identified and confirmed the state of progresses made and challenges against the established key progress of targeted-indicators both quantitative and qualitative as outlined in the annual project design document. The only issues and interruption to the project progresses was related to the period and impact of COVID-19 pandemic restriction and lockdown which have affected the whole project activities and targets expected to be achieved.

Organized FGDs were done already for Male - adult and Female Adult participants, youth-male and youth-female participants. All discussion made with all different participant groups mostly revealed the same technical and management and market issues. Consultant hence decided to undertake repeated observation in to more Vanilla growing farms in order to continually assess and have a clear understanding about the Vanilla producer farmers experiences, perceptions and opinions and benefits from the project so far. At the end, a key institutional analysis has been undertaken to understand and examine the existing Vanilla value chain support system and structure in place supporting and sustaining the overall Vanilla development framework and industry potentials.

An impartial and interactive process of evaluation activities and analysis on the Vanilla "Beans of Hope" (Livelihood Program) was undertaken from 11 - 15 July 2022 already in all 5 Vanilla - plantation villages. Within the all 5 villages 1 village

(Railaco - Ieten) has a great numbers of total village population households participating in Vanilla Farming activities compared to others participating villages; 3 villages (Deleço, Taraço and Samalete) are considered remotes and isolated; and only 2 villages (Cocoa sub-village of Railaco - Kraik) have a better access to regular - daily market .

Consultant was assisted by the project FBOs to have randomly selected key sub-villages under each village category for in-field data collection focus.

#### **a. Vanilla Farmers Family Livelihood and Basic Source of Income**

Most of the Vanilla “Beans of Hope” (livelihood program) producers are subsistence farmers and coffee growers. Naturally, they continually grow a simple horticulture products for consumption and with less quantity nor quality business market benefits. Some farmers interviewed also confirmed to have been additionally growing Konjack (*Amorphophallus muelleri*) under their coffee trees. Konjack is a perennial tuberous plant in the family Araceae which interest most of Timor-Leste farmers nowadays due to its high export sales price to overseas countries in particularly Indonesia. Timor-Leste exported 4,000tons of Konjack annually<sup>9</sup>.

Most respondents confirmed that their villages have the less presence of other NGOs works like MMT. They have neither engaged with ever implemented DFAT-funded TOMAK<sup>10</sup> project or USAID - funded AVANSA<sup>11</sup> project as well to have been able to learn about better technology in horticulture production and inputs supplies support system which would eventually might have been potentially applied in planting Vanilla and horticulture in their village already. AVANSA project has interestingly introduced an important agriculture inputs supply business system to allow farmers improve the need of production inputs requirement to secure and sustain investment productivity. Under the system a farmer was encouraged and facilitated to obtain a credit of required inputs such as greenhouse plastic sheets, tillers, etc from input supplier company such as Vinod Patel under 40%:60% system of repayment system which would be possibly have been applied and facilitating the need in Vanilla production too.

It was observed in two different locations that pock coy have been grown simply besides Vanilla plants without a proper bedding or a proper-regular watering system reducing the quality of the grown vegetable plants. Vanilla farmers also raise animals such as chicken, pig, goat and Bali cattle in a traditional way too. The impact from this various subsistence farming practices has let to decrease the quality of times investment focus and outputs produced from Vanilla farming which leads to low productivity and quality of the grown Vanilla. Most of Vanilla farmers differently confirmed their period of planting Vanilla from 2015, 2018

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<sup>9</sup> Information collected from Consultant's interview with MDF in another assessment project previously.

<sup>10</sup> TOMAK was a new agricultural livelihoods program funded by the Australian government's aid program in Timor-Leste during 2016 - 2021 and is implementing the second phase from 2022 already. TOMAK's goal is to ensure its selected rural households live more prosperous and sustainable lives and is implemented in 3 Municipalities of Baucau, Bobonaro and Viqueque.

<sup>11</sup> The Avansa Agrikultura activity is a central component of USAID's strategy to strengthen institutional and human capacity in Timor-Leste and was implemented in 5 Municipalities of Aileu, Ainaro, Bobonaro, Dili, Liquica and Ermera during 2015 - 2020 already.

and 2020 initially organized through the ERFA or inspired by other participating families previously involved already otherwise because they had been significantly inspired by the fact that income profits from Vanilla market is higher than coffee.

Coffee beans harvesting period was just recently concluded during this evaluation work field visits to Vanilla plantation villages of the project location. Farmers expressed the fact that coffee beans harvested was very little in this year therefore reducing the income of the farmers. Interview with one Vanilla farmer in Samalete village confirmed that apart from CCT agent buying the coffee beans from His village, He also facilitates coffee beans purchasing by a Korean private company in Dili with a better price at \$3 per kg of cleaned coffee beans already which is higher than \$1.50 per kg only by the CCT if it would have also decided to buy only the same coffee bean quality as done by Korean private company already. This 39 years old of young vanilla producer confirmed that He has been continuously advised by His Korean business partner to continue growing in a larger scale of Vanilla for the future value adding business of Vanilla - Coffee tea industry in His village. So, He has now been well influenced and encouraged to have planted 1,100 vines of Vanilla and is aiming to grow more until 12,000 vines of Vanilla plants in the next 4 years in order to reach a considered quantity for intended Vanilla - Coffee value adding industry needs.

Considering regular Vanilla price and coffee price fluctuation in the market, the Vanilla farmers interviewed expressed their frustration as the income received from coffee and vanilla sales have not been able to provide and secure their enough incomes and improve their standard of living. Most of interviewed Vanilla producers hence continually confirmed that they would have to engaged with other additional and easy incomes returned economic livelihood opportunities as well leaving the more times have to be spent for Vanilla production is ever since uneasy. So, on the way to reach the FGD or KII participants there we would continuously see groups of women and men lining up along the road cleaning work project which in return they will be compensated at \$5 a day for the works they have individually performed. Rural road maintenance project is promoted by the government to provide immediate cash for unemployed and poorest families in the rural and isolated areas such in the Vanilla “Beans of Hope” project villages.

## **b. Vanilla production and Farm Management practices and Investment**

Most of Vanilla farmers interviewed considered the most tireless and hardest times spending at Vanilla farming works was in preparing and applying locally made compost (organic fertilizer) to the plants, watering and pollinating Vanilla flowers which require times investment focus and patients. Finding and collecting quantity organic materials such as tree peels, leafs and manures are timely consuming as it often requires to find them from outside the farm site or even requires for buying from a nearby chicken and other animal farms. The level of time spending commitment between the farmers is different from one to another which can be easily observed from the way surrounding vine of

Vanilla plants had been managed and covered with organic compost materials. **Pictures 1 and 2** below suggest the model surrounding vine of Vanilla plants treatment and cover which individual Vanilla “Beans of Hope” project farmer needs to considerably opting or practicing.



**Picture 1:** Around the basement of Vanilla plant in Bohemata hamlet is securely embanked with trunks and is fully covered with rotten tree peels, leafs and manures (Photo: July 2022).



**Picture 2:** Growing Vanilla within the organoponic-shaped bedding techniques in Samalete village to permanently prevent erosion and stimulate the proper accumulation and processing of organic soil nutrients applied to the plants already (Photo: July 2022)

The models as portrayed already in two pictures above are typical organoponic-shaped bedding techniques in horticulture and Vanilla production and are only differentiated by their typical materials being invested to construct already. The choice of constructing cemented organoponic-shaped bedding facility (*Picture 2*) will require a significant financial investment to buy hollow-bricks, cement and sand which might not be easily arranged by an ordinary and low-income Vanilla producer family. A very ideal and important practice emphasized to all ordinary and low-income Vanilla producers hence as has been provided in picture 1 already requires times commitment by the farmers and should become the emphasized standard for all Vanilla “Beans of Hope” (Livelihood Program) farmers.

A young married couple family in Taraço village has progressively planted up to 1000 Vanilla plants at their nearby farm. The couple had initially received 30 plants only from the project FBOs already and continuously inspired to increase the numbers of plants by own purchase from already growing Vanilla farming site and every two days of each week this couple family members spent 2 hours working in the Vanilla planting site to watering, cleaning the grasses and ensures that their built surrounding fences are still secure enough to protect their growing Vanilla plants from animal destruction or any potentially natural-causing destruction. The couple have been courageously expecting to witnessing their coming vanilla flowering and beans from next year.

Discussing about the experience of the MAF’s National Directorate of Coffee and Commercial Agroforestry technical team in vanilla production management and technical criteria proposed that an individual Vanilla producer would have to have a minimum 0.25ha of production farm size to be able to grow up to a maximum of 400 Vanilla plants only, arguing that this limits is very important to ensure that individual producer will have enough capacity and time in daily management and in pollinating process. A farming size beyond this number requires a more financial and additional workforce and labour investment support. The MAF technical criteria already and the numbers of 1000 plants which a young married couple family in Taraço village has progressively planted are important variables which requires further analysis and compromises to properly recommend appropriate management skill and practices for effectively managing such a significant numbers of planted Vanilla by young married couple family in Taraço village so far.

In Samalete village an individual young person assisted His family to regularly take care of his family’s Vanilla production. His family decided to constructing Vanilla protective plants or climbing poles differently from other farmers’ option using dried poles dressed with palm fibers sheets cover. Within his Vanilla growing site nearby perimeters, this family also grow pock coy vegetables presumably commencing from 22 days ago already. However, when Consultant looked at the grown Vanilla site, it was surprisingly found that plants trees basement soil surface is very dried for probably without being watered for a month already. The consultant decided to further ask the owner about what has

been observed and He replied that He has not watered the Vanilla plants for a quite sometimes already when He and his parents went to a nearby village attending the funeral of His extended family member there. The finding hence clearly indicates the fact that vanilla planting has continuously come under a less intensive system by the farmers.

In Deleço village women's lead savings and loan group proudly confirmed that all of the group members are obliged to grow vanilla however, due to the water shortage women and girls cannot be regularly assist husbands in watering the grown Vanilla nor willing to support the decision by family or husband to expand the quantity of Vanilla farm in to new site in a quite distance from surrounding house.

It was found that the majority of Vanilla planting sites are not securely fenced nor fenced without using other sustainable protective fencing tree plants. In Samalete village in particularly, an individual Vanilla producer fenced the planting site using protective zinc sealing surrounds the site believed to protect the site from potential destruction by Cat and Monkey because the owner also cultivates Catfish and Tilapia inside the same planting site. However, Consultant team considered the option is believed to rather create additional heats to the grown Vanilla trees hence reducing their growth process. In Railaco-Kraik and Deleço village vanilla planting sites are not fenced or fenced simply that would be easily overpassed by intruding animals anytime.

In Deleço village a very old men of above 70 years old of age found very much encouraging to himself to continually joining his other neighborhood friends planting vanilla. However, during almost a 2 years already He has not been able to plant more than 8 previously planted vanilla already at surrounding his house constrained by his physical incapability to expand to another site and to intensively managed nor increase the numbers of plants. He also has a concern over the fact that He is the only one living inside his home of everly great family membership presences nowadays. When the Consultant asked Him why He feels to be the only one doing the work, He replied that His children have been married and the single ones also migrated to Europe since 4 years ago already to look for a better paid jobs.

Everywhere of the Consultant's visited Vanilla growing sites have without any proper watering irrigation system facility. In Railaco - Leten and Samalete villages two important observation found the way two farmers have integrated aquaculture and Vanilla production to use water from aquaculture ponds for regular watering Vanilla plants easily and would be continually filling up the fishponds again before it dries out. In Railaco-kraik an individual male Vanilla producer interviewed argued that His family decided to grow Vanilla closer to the spring far from His house to easy regular watering otherwise they would have made all his all-planted Vanillas died easily if they have been planted at surrounding house already. In particularly in Cocoa, Railaco - Kraik village, a mother where His married son with His wife have daily working routines in their Vanilla farm far from their home, expressed that She and her Husband have courageously prepared and worked alongside their Married Son daily routine works inside the farm as an obligation **"to leave behind a good legacy to their**

**Son and his family”**. Inside the farm, this family is also continually planting fruit trees, Konjack and other vegetables crops such as Bock Coy and Tomatoes which would be daily watered using waters coming out from Tilapia fish cultivation ponds they have.

The lessons learned particularly from such the innovative ways in Vanilla planting in Samalete and Railako-Kraik villages already suggest individual farmers have to be able technically and are individually motivated to be creative always in order to reducing the challenges in Vanilla production and farm management system. It is important that an integrated approach is needed to motivate subsistence farmers sustainable engagement and benefits from Vanilla production and industry.

#### **b. Vanilla production and farming institutional support**

Locally-managed Vanilla economy institutional development support sustains Vanilla development productivity and market growth. So far, consists a 27 vanilla farmer groups across 5 villages of the Vanilla “Beans of Hope” project already and the need to continually motivate and facilitate the remaining active vanilla cultivating individual farmers to join or form themselves in to an organized Vanilla producer group is now imperative. The process to encourage more Vanilla producers joining Vanilla producer organization group hence shall be done systematically and organizationally has to become integral in to the priority of village development needs in all 5 villages of Vanilla “Beans of Hope” project locations. Most of the Vanilla farmers interviewed through FGD or KII confirmed to have recently or for a longer time already joining a producer group and practicing savings and loans. They also confirmed that through the group they have been easily received training from the project FBOs.

The evaluation observed that most of the existing Vanilla producer group have instead developed their capacity and self-commitment in savings and loans established internal regulation to better serve their basic needs for financial inclusion support for any urgent need of cash largely for food consumption, basic health support, supporting children school fees and other basic needs, and their internal regulation of loan provision applies for internal group membership only. None of the group members loans have been directly used for Vanilla production and investment needs and this was primarily constrained by the fact that as the individual group loan repayment period is very limited whereas, the income received from Vanilla sales would take longer time of investment return process, any individual loans repayment that is expected to be covered from income received from Vanilla sales will rather create significant debt problem for individual borrower.

One Municipality MAF extension worker is assigned in to Railaco-Kraik village but is physically handicapped since an accident he experienced during the service some years ago. He was graduated from Agriculture college where He was basically trained in polyvalent agriculture training. However, all interviewed Vanilla producers confirmed that they have never been receiving any visit by MAF Extension worker at their farm.

Within Ermera Municipality MAF structure includes a section responsible for Coffee and Commercial Agroforestry development works that is also aimed for coordinating Vanilla, Cocoa, Candle nut and Coconut plantation. However, this section unit only has 2 staff comprises 1 Head of Unit and 1 technical person which has never been effective enough to always visit and provide technical support across all Coffee and Vanilla plantation villages across Ermera Municipality regularly. This unit is also disproportionately financed annually and without specific regular government budget allocation to also continually develop Vanilla industry in Ermera creates an uncertainty for the unit to initiate nor progressively develop or support development investment in this sector importantly. This situation clearly justifies that institutionally Ermera Municipality MAF office is not in a proper capacity to regularly be able to provide institutional support to the Vanilla “Beans of Hope” (Livelihood Program) needs in the area of training and M&E. Primarily, this situation has been a direct impact from the fact that neither MAF central office or Ermera Municipality MAF office do not have a specific strategic planning and policy in place already in order to guide Vanilla development efforts and needs. Additionally, the ongoing centralized government financing system creates uncertainty to MAF Municipality office to consistently financing its plans and commitment for any specific agribusiness investment project such as Vanilla. Ultimately, as the MAF Municipality office is also unaware about the importance progress made by Vanilla “Beans of Hope” (Livelihood Program) already, their continuous support will be mainly be depending on what resources they might have on hand to realize.

The Vanilla “Beans of Hope” (Livelihood Program) collaborates with IADE and SECoop to provide business and basic cooperative management training to some of the Vanilla producer groups members already. IADE has recently undertaken a basic assessment for some of the groups in order to develop specific business capacity building training needs further. Consultation with the Head Department of Training of IADE in Dili agreed to continue reassess business motivation, interest and basic knowledge among individual producer group members before any specific plans and training is going to be provided. Additionally, it was also required for the joint-MMT and IADE efforts to establish a proper business training framework and plan to provide regular upgrading business training to Vanilla producers and regular M&E.

The project lacks promotional efforts and materials in Vanilla production techniques and market information which have the potential to motivate and facilitate significant engagement of the farmers in to the Vanilla industry. Important promotional materials shall include brochures and posters containing information about Vanilla ‘Best Practices’ and Business market information that shall be distributed and placed at the producers homes. Other promotional activities shall be done through informative session through Community Radio of Ermera and also posters placed at individual house, community halls, schools, market and Ermera Municipality MAF office which until now unavailable. Organize a special occasion of socializing the project at the Church and Schools and regular project update - through formal and informal meeting visits - to members of village council regularly to provide an update about the project and

discuss emerging issues and this should be properly arranged under a proper institutional support mechanism to be re-established.

Project innovation should be continuously promoted through all forms of innovative ways of Vanilla planting and management system. The FBOs can organize a special or regular convergence of some Vanilla producers to show them about best practices and experiences in Vanilla farming in other similar weather and climatic region or communities through a documentary movie or even the ones accessible via YouTube channels and to be shown during the informal visit convergences that will practically contribute to promote dialogue and discussion, raises awareness and knowledge of our subsistence Vanilla farmers in the best technical and management practices of Vanilla farming strategy. This convergence shall be organized at the MMT office base in Railaco or at the Community halls or at a Vanilla producer house during one regular monitoring visit of the FBOs.

### **c. Issues, Challenges and Risks in Vanilla production**

Vanilla farmers are continuously concerned about typical white grubs and common hairy caterpillars pest attacks which mainly eats Vanilla green leafs and flowers and would leave holes on the leafs and also attacks the principal roots of vanilla vein. Additionally, farmers also concerned about typical invading insect during Vanilla flowering period which might prevent pollination successful. Preliminarily it can be assumed that pest parasites might have been propagated due to a degree of tree peels and other organic materials accumulation on the basement surface of the Vanilla plant or probably they were already brought in along when the peels, leafs and manures transferred from their origin to the plant that would then easily propagating and ultimately invade the plants growth. The FBOs have taught farmers to apply organic pesticides however, that similar invasive pest attack would return again after sometimes requires beyond - this organic pesticide application but organic pest resistant know how and technology application instead and with a follow-up constant monitoring by the FBOs.

Water scarcity limiting farmers to constantly watering their vanilla plants twice a day requirement during the dried months period from July until November annually. It would also discourage new ordinary farmers to participate nor prioritize growing Vanilla as their farming objective, or the existing vanilla producers expand their existing Vanilla farm size immediately. Women in particularly are reluctant to support the ideas of planting more Vanillas away from surrounding house as it would be difficult to ensure regular watering and immediate regular cares. It was common to all Vanilla "Beans of Hope" farmers irrigate their vanilla plants very simply using jerrycans or dipper normally once after every two days. Farmers who have access or in possession of permanent water sources spray their Vanillas twice a day regularly. The Evaluation visits in to all project villages have never found any dripping irrigation system facilities used in Vanilla planting and when asked some producers a reason that the system has not been common in their villages, all interviewed farmers confirmed to don't know how to use it nor in a possession of financial capital to arrange the system already. The consultant further investigated whether they have ever

considered using loans from their saving and loan group to arrange the facility but the farmers have rather concerned about the cost and repayment issues.

Vanilla farmers risk their Vanilla plants to be possibly destroyed when the nearby old or dried trunkly-tall albizia coffee plantation trees cover may fall anytime during rainy season as recently experienced already by a talented Vanilla farmer in Erqueme hamlet of Railaco-Kraik to have lost almost all of his well grown Vanillas already during an evening heavy rain pours. This experience suggests that Vanilla planting area have to be done outside congested coffee plantation and under coffee plantation tree cover areas. However, making this idea being application farmers might be constrained by land tenure issues which requires further investigation.

Lack of Vanilla plant protection are also common among the farmers due to lack of proper fencing of the site or not even a surrounding fence exist that will protect planted vanilla from animal destruction permanently. Therefore, Vanilla producers need to be encouraged to grow permanent fence - protective tress to sustainably surround the farm site Vanilla plants from possible intruding animal destruction. Some farmers also seen to be risking the live of some planted Vanillas already for draining a contaminated detergent water from nearby connecting tap daily used for washing and bathing hence they need to be advised to rework the existing draining process before final release of the water in to the plants.

In all Vanilla “Beans of Hope” villages Vanilla farming is highly dominated by parents and elder people which continuously posing a potential risk for the future Vanilla Economy industry of Timor-Leste if without a potential engagement of young people from initial stage in nowadays. This situation has been largely caused by more young people urbanizing in to Dili city or migrating to overseas countries such as Britain, Portugal and North Ireland to find a more better employment opportunity. Timor-Leste government shall be able preventing or minimizing this potential brain drain phenomenon through important policy enabling to facilitate youth employment in Vanilla and other agribusiness value chain industry potential in Timor-Leste. During a Virtual conversation with Dili Vanilla company this issues was highly alerted and therefore is recommended to have a further study on this specific subject in the future.

#### **d. Vanilla Business and Marketing**

Vanilla beans are continuously sold to CCT and Dili Vanilla company only and some vanilla producers have just sold their Vanilla beans to CCT three months ago receiving \$18 only or \$200 depending on the quantity of beans have been sold to CCT recently. Both companies ever provided technical training to Vanilla “Beans of Hope” project farmers and this needed to be adoptable. All interviewed Vanilla producers confirmed that price of selling Vanilla beans was just unfair, however, when asked to confirm specific beans grades they have normally sold to buying companies, they confirmed to have normally sold mixtures of under - quality and quantity Grades Vanilla beans. In specifically when the Consultant showed them own hand drawing of 4 types of Grade sizes of Vanilla beans which

the farmers might have normally brought for selling to the buyers already, most of interviewed farmers confirmed to have normally brought and sold a more beans of grades C and D types mostly and at the same time would normally only have up to 10 beans of Grade A type and some 14 beans of Grade B type. Discussion and argument between on the factual trend helped the Farmers to realize what are main problems which they have not able to solve themselves in Vanilla marketing and business.

Ideally, Vanilla “Beans of Hope” farmers must be able to produce and sell a more premium grade types quality and quantity Vanilla beans only in order to sustain income and inter-farmers and buyers strategic and sustained business relationship. However, in order to ensure this to be sustainably happening, Vanilla farmers need to be individually and institutionally motivated, committed and facilitated.

Interviewed farmers also expressed the importance of vanilla processing to reproduce unsold Vanilla beans in to additional marketable products such as soup, herbal tea, and perfumes. Subsequently, an interview with Director of FSN, confirmed a possibility to support the Vanilla “Beans of Hope” farmers in producing mixed - Fig fruits and vanilla flavored wine, beers, herbal tea and seasoning products helping the Vanilla ‘Beans of Hope” project farmers to sustain Vanilla production and growth potentially. FSN is a Timorese local company promoting Fig industry in Timor-Leste. Currently FSN progressively works in Oé-cusse Ambeno, the enclave region of Timor-Leste within the territory of Indonesia in the western part of the same Timor island to develop an integrated Fig-Tourism industry development movement initiating from a land subsidized by the government to have been continually used to develop FSN-Government owned Fig plantation demonstration and nursery plot and Fig fruits processing center to have been producing and selling fig-made marketable seasoning and herbal tea products, wine and beer in to Dili and local market nowadays.

An important participation of Vanilla “Beans of Hope” project farmers business potential with Dili Vanilla company continuously inevitable provided Vanilla “Beans of Hope” project farmers comply with quality and quantity requirement of the Dili Vanilla company. Unfortunately, this evaluation had never been able to meet in person with owner of the Dili Vanilla company as planned. Both Consultant and Dili Vanilla Company representative has a very short virtual conversation by mobile phone when Consultant requested an appointment to me Him and He was able to share an important aspect of sustaining Vanilla Economic investment in Timor-Leste which now needs a further study about.

In short, the evaluation found that Vanilla “Beans of Hope” project farmers business and marketing requirement capacity needs to be developed continually through a productive institutional support and operational system.

## **V. CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED**

### **5.1 Conclusions**

Most of Vanilla farmers organized under Vanilla “Beans of Hope” (Livelihood Program) by the Mary Mackillop Today in Railaco, Ermera Municipality consider Vanilla as another green gold economy potential ahead of the Coffee due to its prominent-promising economic return. The Vanilla “Beans of Hope” (Livelihood Program) has in particularly established the important foundation for Vanilla economic institution locally and is now required to continue internally improve and strengthen the organizational and entrepreneurial motivation and the capacity of Vanilla farmers to produce market-quantity and quality of Vanilla beans only to be able to sustain the growing vanilla market industry so far.

The Vanilla Beans of Hope” (Livelihood Program) also needs to promote a significant multi-sectoral synergies and complementarity taking an advantage of the existing government platform of the “Interministerial Commission for Coordinating the Value Chain and Encouraging Local Production” in Timor-Leste to systematically guides and catalyzes complementary for Vanilla economic development and investment support system hence sustaining the Vanilla economic vision for Timor-Leste significantly.

### **5.2 Lessons Learned**

A mother of Vanilla producer in Railaco - kraik has courageously invested times in Vanilla production and management cares aimed for leaving behind the good legacy for the Children. In Bohemata of Deleço village, women members of the same Vanilla producer and savings and loan group decided to concentrate on managing Savings and Loans while encouraging their husband to be responsible for vanilla production works as it will normally require physical works and quite far from home. The opinion of these women-mother and women group members already is suggesting that women leadership shall be significantly motivated in Vanilla production management and decision making. During an interview with two groups of male-vanilla producers in Erqueme, Railaco-kraik and Samalete villages already also rejected the common public perception about “Taboo” for women not to engage in any Vanilla farming as a misleading perception or believe which discouraging more families and in particularly women and girls to own and actively involve with Vanilla production. This rejection significantly justifies that women’s roles in Vanilla production and management will need be exceptionally considered.

More expansion of Vanilla production and the acts of innovation in Vanilla production techniques, e.g., opting different Vanilla protective plants or climbing poles, or different ways in producing and applying organic fertilizer and pesticides model are significantly done by inspired individual youth-vanilla producers compared to the elders. Members of interviewed individual youth-vanilla producers confirmed that aside from receiving technical training from

the FBOs, they were also regularly learning about the best technologies and system of planting and managing Vanilla production from Youtube video channels. The acts have been significantly inspiring to join the Vanilla “Beans of Hope” project and expand the numbers of produced Vanilla plants easily using the knowledge they have learned already. This particular experience and opinions by Youth-individual Vanilla producer already shall be seen as encouraging to inspire and motivate more young people’s engagement in the Vanilla “Beans of Hope” project sustainability strategy.

Direct engagement of members Village Council, e.g. Village Chief, Sub-village Chief, Delegado and Delegada or Youth-Male and Youth-Female as Vanilla Producers motivates larger community members to participate in the Vanilla farming. For instance, in a village called Taraço, Village Chief has been an active Vanilla producer is importantly encouraging other households participation and facilitate the Vanilla “Beans of Hope” FBOs to implement the project in His village easily. This story importantly suggests that the project needs to encourage a more active participation and roles of the members of Village Council in the Vanilla “Beans of Hope” community mobilization and/or Vanilla production.

Timor-Leste National Development strategic plans clearly prioritize the association of Coffee and Vanilla production to promote a high valued market crops justifies the importance of sustaining the Vanilla “Beans of Hope” (Livelihood Program) in Ermera Municipality. Previously the MAF central office directly subsidized farmers in other parts of Ermera Municipality to participate in Vanilla production through a directly-managed public transfer to potential farmer recipients. The process was seen as simply limiting MAF’s Ermera Municipality office roles in beneficiaries’ selection and M&E. Unfortunately, after one and a half years of the development this top-down approach has rather failed to achieve Vanilla productivity and arrive market gain continuously already and the fact as the subsidy has never been monitored and managed systematically - the subsidy option has never succeeded any development of Vanilla Value chain system in place so far.

In contrary the Vanilla “Beans of Hope” (Livelihood program) opted a different approach to rather inspire subsistence farmers motivation and interest in Vanilla production without financial and any kind of subsidy but with technical training and coaching in Vanilla production and organizational strengthening. As a result a young couple household family in Taraço village who had initially received 5 Vanilla plants only in 2018 had continually able to multiply and expand to have able to grow a 1000 Vanilla plants in 2022 already through own financial investment as a result of regular close coaching and motivation of the project FBOs while this particular producer’s own inspiration of the Vanilla economic potential to the his family from next year onward progressively when the 1000 planted Vanillas will have producing fruits and got purchased by the buyers.

The observations have found that promoting other - within a shorter period of time - of potential income-generating opportunities before coffee and Vanilla

is maintaining individual vanilla producer times commitment hence developing specialization in Vanilla industry as well. .

## **VI. RECOMMENDATION**

### **6.1 Reorganization of the Vanilla “Beans of Hope (Livelihood Program) Management and Structure**

A recent World Bank report overwhelmingly emphasizes Timor-Leste diversification of the economy through essential development export sectors for sustained growth (World Bank report, June 2022), alerting the need to focus Agriculture sector investment motions in Timor-Leste progressively. The newly elected Timor-Leste President of Republic, Mr. Jose Ramos Horta is seemed to obligingly aware of this important alert fundamentally making a step ahead move to inaugurate the launch of Coffee plantation rehabilitation project realized in Ermera Municipality only in less than a month after the published World Bank’s overwhelm report already. Significantly, the alert has already come amid the government and development partners’ concern over the potential Timor-Leste’s oil reserves depletion in the very near coming future.

Agriculture and fisheries are critical sectors for poverty reduction and employment generation in Timor-Leste. In particularly coffee, vanilla, candlenut, and turmeric are considered of the high-premium agriculture cash crops suitable for Timor-Leste natural environment (Logan, sarah, et.all (2021, Pag:14 & 19). Currently, the Vanilla “Beans of Hope” (Livelihood Program) has laid an important foundation of Vanilla economy growth while continuously trying to improve farmers mobilization and support strategic approach to institutionally sustain a sound community-managed Vanilla business industry potential in Timor-Leste principally. The Vanilla “Beans of Hope” (Livelihood Program) evaluation finding suggests a reorganization of the project institutional strategy encouraging a multi-sectoral support operations and complementarity.

To this specific needs, the Consultant suggests that Marry MacKillop Today extends its present role towards another 3 years to continually undertakes important inspiring roles to motivate and improve the Vanilla “beans of Hope” (Livelihood Program) producer groups’ internal organizational and entrepreneurial capacity and commitment through important-identified development gaps that will be elaborated further in the following section. The extension of Marry MacKillop Today presence and support to the current Vanilla “Beans of Hope” (Livelihood Program) is also important to develop and adopt an important operational framework plans for multisectoral synergy and support to the Vanilla ‘Beans of Hope’ project specifically with the established “Interministerial Commission for Value Chain and Local Production and with Ermera Municipality government administration which has been planned to finally establish before the end of 2023 in parallel with other planned municipalities establishment already.

Overall, this project evaluation has not found any problem related with the quantity of the MMT project staff in the field coordinating or facilitating the project organization and farmer’s mobilization needs. A specific observation which was

made in to understanding how the FBOs have been facilitated to performs their quality facilitating roles however, found that the MMT needs to provide significant quantity and quality of the promotional materials and local knowledge of the FBOs should be made available in the field during visits to the farms. Promotional materials such as produced posters about Vanilla production and pollination techniques materials in Tetum or Bahasa Indonesia, or even videos materials about best practices, which can be used for regular awareness for the whole village community and Vanilla producers groups specifically anytime when the FBOs visit the Vanilla producers.

The Consultant sees the urgent need to accelerate the “Train the Trainers” program activity to identify and train selected Vanilla farmers as T.O.T trainers to perform the FBOs roles as well. Predictably, in the future when the MMT exits its roles, the FBOs and members of T.O.T shall continually determine the roles of farmer groups and Cooperative organization to supervise and support farmers need for technical training and couching. Also given the fact that MAF’s Ermera Municipality is under-resourced, the FBOs and members of TOT shall alternate the roles needed by MAF’s Ermera Municipality office to continually provide technical support to the farmers in the future after the MMT exit.

The following sections inform some of the key recommended options for institutional support strategies and complementary efforts and their functionality to promoting and sustaining the Vanilla “Beans of Hope” (Livelihood Program). The following set to recommended options emerged from questions and response provided from the evaluation work undertaken already.

#### **6.1.a Improved organizational and entrepreneurial capacity of Vanilla Producers Group**

The next phase of the project needs to focus on improving the internal organizational and entrepreneurial capacity and skills of Vanilla Producers Group members to importantly participate and succeed Vanilla productivity. The observation by Consultant found and hence suggests that each Vanilla producer group must have their own group’s activity and training plans; production quantity and quality plans and targets; business and marketing plans and targets where this will serve as the basis for measuring group members’ commitment and performances in Vanilla development and investment productivity and growth.

The process to ensure this organizational capacity needs have to start from ensuring that individual farmer continuously has motivation, self-confidence and commitment. Important discussion which the Consultant had with IADE concluded and recommended to udertake reassessment of the entrepreneurial motivation, interest, knowledge and skills of each individual member of the Vanilla producer group in order to identify gaps and potentials in group mobilization and commitment and hence appropriately develop and provide specific business development skills requirement continuously.

All village chiefs interviewed already expressed their motivation to promote and support the sustainability of the Vanilla “Beans of Hope” (Livelihood

Program) by identifying and ensuring that every interested individual Vanilla producer existed already in their villages must be encouraged and motivated to join in the membership of Vanilla producer group either the existing one already or newly-formed Vanilla producer group so they will be easily supported by the project FBOs and other government support intended to complement the Vanilla “Beans of Hope” (Livelihood Program).

In particularly in Railaco-kraik village its Village Chief has claimed to have all 50% of his village community engaged with Vanilla production already due to their better access to water sources, however, His concern over the remaining 50% of his community who also have similar interest and motivation but have not been easily participated nor benefited from the Vanilla “Beans of Hope” (Livelihood Program) due to water scarcity as this half portion of community live away from water source. According to the Village Chief, this remaining 50% of population shall be easily motivated if the project and government are able to resolve water scarcity issue already.

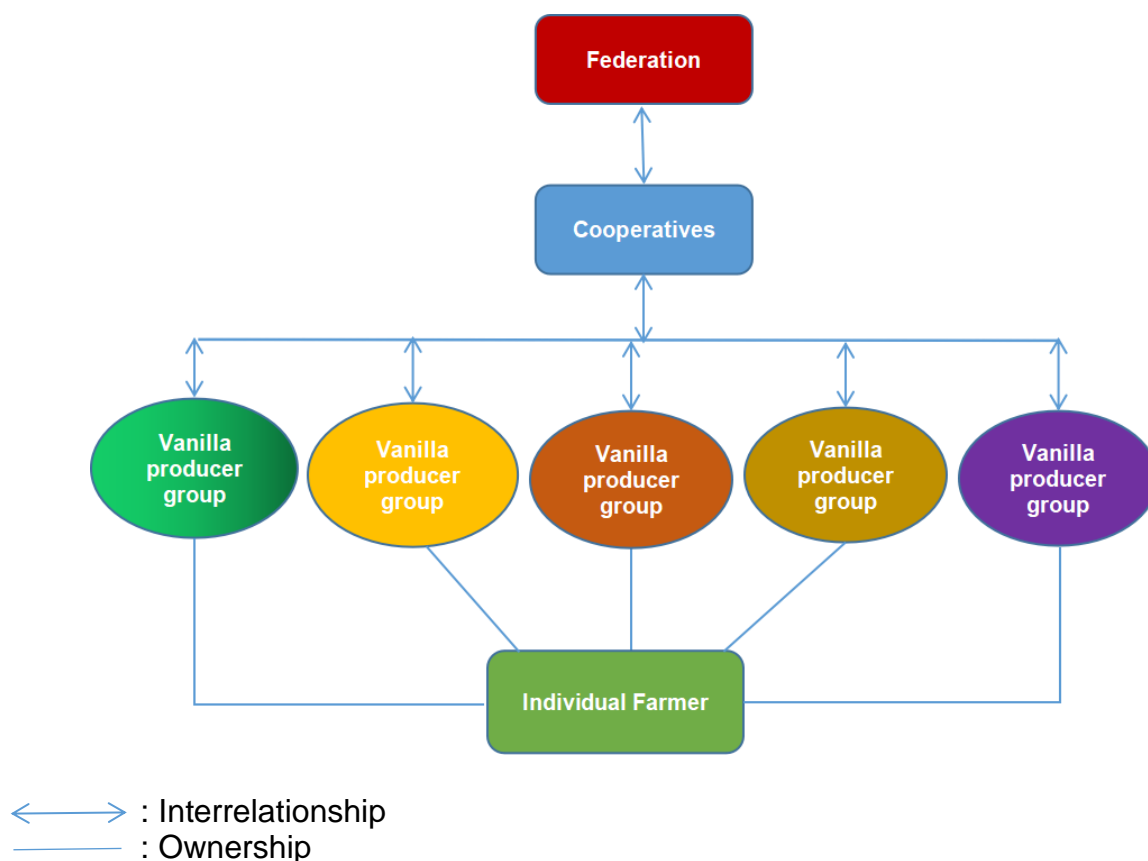
During KII and FGD session with some of the Vanilla producers discussed the need to train and couch on savings and loans - Vanilla producer groups in financial reinvestment strategy to be able to grow the capacity of their existing - accumulated savings and loans already. Members of KII and FGD participants also raised their concerns over the lack of capacity of lending members to repay their loans easily on time due to their inability to secure financial income on time from productive or business activity. This concern hence suggests the need to promote additional income-generating activity for the Vanilla producer are important.

In Bohemata hamlet, savings and loans activity of one Vanilla producer group there is managed by the wives (women) at large where their husbands or male who are excluded from their savings and loan group membership have been advised to be responsible for production works which would mostly involve physical and distance works. This division of responsibility places women in decision making and management responsibility and therefore is important for organization management strengths. This savings and loans group model must be incorporated as a systemic component of the Vanilla farmers group’s organizational development need for the Vanilla “Beans of Hope” (Livelihood Program).

Each producer group must practice savings and loans and shall be encouraged to participate as cooperative members in the future as advised by the Secretariat of State of Cooperatives and Village Chief of Taraço to ensure the sustainability of Vanilla “Beans of Hope” project institutional need. Individual Vanilla producer who hasn’t joined any producer group yet must be encouraged and facilitated to join in the membership of a Vanilla producer group within the village to be easily mobilized or organized themselves to learn about technical knowledge, business and financial literacy and numeracy, and is better accompanied and supported in doing Vanilla production efforts. Cooperative is one of the pillars of economic development in Timor-Leste as enshrined in the National Constitution in particularly article 138.

The diagram 1 below describes an option for institutional model for community-managed Vanilla development industry in consideration of the government vision and community mobilization approach.

**Diagram 1:** An institutional model for community-managed Vanilla development industry



### 6.1.b Promote Vanilla Farmers Resource Center

A Vanilla Farmers Resource Center is very central for continued transfers of Vanilla production know how information and innovation system required by the project FBOs and Vanilla producers. Simply, a Vanilla Farmers Resources Center should be a joint-Vanilla farmers groups and cooperative-owned resource center which functions a one-stop shop operational system that provides a complete range of technical information, inputs, services, information and output marketing linkages that Vanilla farmers need to transition from subsistence to pre-commercial and commercial production level. In quite poor and isolated villages of the Vanilla “Beans of Hope” project locations from the normal market services and urban areas so far, operating a Vanilla Farmers Resource Center services is significantly bringing the services closer to Vanilla producers and other largest horticulture producers’ existence hence facilitating progressive changes in Vanilla production and organizational manners and system.

Community halls and community meeting space built under the PNDS program or others which is not regularly and fully utilized may be used for Vanilla Farmers Resources Center need. Often is used as Vanilla business services and training centre to provide know how innovative techniques and tools to the farmers, students and business entities willing to learn and get involved in the vanilla value chain development system. Basically, it facilitates access to high-quality inputs and services required by the farmers and interested public and private businesses operate in Vanilla value chain development industry.

The FBOs and members of “Train the Trainers” group are daily managing the Vanilla Farmers Resources Center operations to provide information, training and interrelated services to the farmers and cooperative members. The FBOs and Members of “Train the Trainers” are key resources persons and facilitators of Vanilla Farmers Resources Center services providers organize and provide field days, demonstration plots, seminars, publicity and promotional works in collaboration with producer groups, suppliers, government and research institutions, funding providers, business operators and universities. FBOs and Farmers Resources Center shall be strategically located within Vanilla farming communities to easily accessed by the farmers anytime they need.

However, process to establish a Vanilla Farmers Resources Center has to begin as an internal motivation and interest of Producer groups and cooperative to establish and operate the system established for the Resources center. In the future a well-established or managed cooperatives e.g. BEHAFU collaborates with Vanilla Farmers Resources Center to coordinate Vanilla marketing and business industry needs. With the guidance of the project, government, producers’ groups and cooperatives create an internal rules and regulation to safeguards the objective and operational guidelines for the resources center. A joint assembly meeting among Producer groups and Cooperative elect and assign Managers and functionality operators selected from interested producer groups members to manages and operator of the resources centers on the rotational basis and they have to possess the skills and capacity to bridge and facilitate farmers and market business requirement.

MMT can immediately establish two Vanilla Farmers Resource Centers before the end of 2022 or during 2023 with one in Railaco - Kraik and one in Taraço or Samalete village. In Railaco-kraik, it will need to expand the current building of the existing clinic to also serve as Vanilla Farmer Resource Center. In Taraço or Samalete village the MMT may collaborate with Village Council to use the space within a recently PNDS-constructed community hall for running the Vanilla Farmers Resource Center too. A Vanilla Farmers Resource Center must possess a sufficient land space surrounding the center for a mini-demo plot activity for demonstration purpose. Hence it must also have a good access to water and also a protection. Alternatively, the MMT may decide to invest in the construction of a simple building similar to the BEHAFU cooperative office building size

or the PNDS project's constructed community hall building size to establish and operate a Vanilla Resource Center.

In Taraço and Samalete village, the project FBOs must collaborates with Youth - Vanilla producer groups to regularly operate and manage the functions of Resource center, while in Railaco - Kraik, the FBOs and Village Chief share the functions to regularly operate and manage Resource Center. A Vanilla Farmers Resource Center needs to have a sufficient space for information and IT room, storage, business room, training and knowledge sharing room, admin and finance room. It must be equipped with one set of wide screen Digital TV, one set of Video Player, 4 small-size office desks; one 3m length of long table and 15 - 25 sitting chairs only.

Municipality MAF's Coffee and Commercial Agroforestry plants collaborate with Vanilla Farmers Resources Center to organize and develop pest-resistant Vanilla nurseries development and distribution system to reduce farmers concerns and problems over the pest attacks on Vanilla. At the same time MAF Extension workers, SECoop and IADE work alongside farmers resources center to organize and provide regular in-class room capacity trainings to cooperatives and Vanilla producers. Resources center facilitates regular Monitoring and evaluation activities against the established operational plans by each producer groups accessing services from the Farmers Resources Center. A compete Standard of Operation or Terms of Reference for establishing and managing a Vanilla Farmers Resource center shall be defined further.

### **6.1.c Develop Complementary Income-Generating activities**

Developing a complementary income-generating activities which guarantees a short period of income returns before Vanilla and coffee is worth ensuring Vanilla producers in a more intensive engagement with Vanilla farming activity and productivity.

Members of Vanilla producer groups are more interested to develop their aquaponic farm besides their house in addition to Vanilla, coffee and animal raising efforts due to its amplified incomes to be produced within a short period of time only. An Aquaponic pond can be established at the backyard and being closer to the house to allow a more times for women and girls at home managing easily. An aquaponic facility can be made of Bamboo and erected-plastic pond without a need to dig down the land surface. It requires to fill up an erected plastic ponds up to a 1m height of water before the fish are brought inside and once it got filled up, they water will be lasted until the harvest of Aquaponic vegetables and fish cultivated. The project FBOs and members of "Train the Trainer" learn how to prepare aquaponic farm horticulture nursery to be grown at the aquaponic establishment so to train the farmers in doing so.

In Ermera Municipality Aquaponic development option helps to sustain existing hatchery and aquaculture market value chain development needs

as Fish fingerlings are easily obtained nowadays from numbers of community-managed Aquaculture hatcheries ponds in Gleno as well as in Leohitu, Bobonaro Municipality. An important collaboration hence shall be made between MMT and MAF and Worldfish Timor-Leste in order to facilitate this complementary option to specifically provide a free of charge of required numbers of fingerlings to each producing families aquaponic pond and also technical training needs which overall frees up financial and management responsibility of the MMT.

Integrated Fish and Horticulture Aquaponic farming option which can be additionally promoted will guarantee such an immediate benefit to the same Vanilla producers' families in terms of regular income and reduction of malnutrition problems.

Other Short-Term complementary income generating activity shall include Vanilla - Coffee or Vanilla - Fig value addition processing industry which have been mentioned in another part in this report already. Promoting homestead gardening (or To'os Tatiis) and keyhole gardening as have been successfully implemented by farmers through other NGOs works in other Municipalities already.

Ideally, whatever alternative options shall be encouraged it will need to be financially cheap, technologically adoptable and sustainably ensures immediate income-generating opportunity before Coffee and Vanilla.

#### **6.1.d Enhanced Monitoring and Evaluation Performance**

It is important to have a joint monitoring and evaluation exercises involving village council members against the established producer groups' plans and targets already. Experiences in the Better Food, Better Health project by the World Vision Timor-Leste, some of villages "Delegado or Delegada"<sup>12</sup> decided to take up role as PSF to lead and inspire their own community awareness and commitment for improving basic health and hygiene and malnutrition and since then have been significantly contributing to the reduction of basic health and hygiene and malnutrition problems in their villages already. In the case where more village leader are also the active members of Vanilla "Beans of Hope" project beneficiaries already, they shall play additional role to lead or facilitate joint monitoring and evaluation roles given their specific knowledge and credibility among their village community already.

Emera Municipality MAF needs to facilitate the project's "Pratika Agrikultura Diak" publication materials to be distributed to every Vanilla producer which will serve as Monitoring and evaluation tools in the expected joint monitoring and evaluation exercises regularly.

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<sup>12</sup> Delegado and Delegada are technical people who also provided in each Village Council membership composition in all villages in Timor-Leste. They also constituted the candidacy list for Village Chief Election rally.

The project regular monthly reports by the FBOs to MMT office have to be based or reflect the established producer groups organizational and entrepreneurial development plans and capacity development indicators too.

#### **6.1.e Promotes a Vanilla Industry Multisectoral Support system**

MAF needs to have its specific Vanilla development and investment plans including its specific Monitoring and Evaluation framework to properly facilitate integrated development efforts and result oriented development support.

Recently, Timor-Leste government has established an Interministerial Commission for Coordinating the Value Chain and Encouraging Local Production. An important interrelationship between the Vanilla “Beans of Hope” (Livelihood Program) needs to be established with the existing Interministerial commission as part of the strengthening of the existing MOUs with SECoop, MAF and IADE already and hence have set a high level vertical institutional support platform mechanism to continually promote the existing Vanilla “Beans of Hope” (Livelihood Program) at the central government policy level hence orients an overall Vanilla Economy vision in Timor-Leste as a whole.

The Vanilla “Beans of Hope” (Livelihood Program) multi-sectoral approach shall aim at bringing in a more partnership efforts to co-promote rural economic development needs and innovation while engaging involved multi-sectoral support stakeholders in regular joint-monitoring of the project and innovative actions that will promote Vanilla Value chain industry potential for Timor-Leste.

Under the established multi-sectoral support platform MAF and MMT specifically develop an important investigative Research and Development (R&D) works to produce typical Vanilla plant’s pest-resistant quality nursery development and distribution system to finally overcoming concerns by farmers over this specific risks on Vanilla production. This expected R&D component shall be integral in the MOU to be signed between MMT and MAF in the future and continue establish its operational frameworks to be easily promoted and implemented at the Municipality level of MAF and at the Vanilla “Beans of Hope” cross-institutional complementary efforts.

PNDS has been present in the villages to complement the Vanilla “Beans of Hope” (Livelihood Program) efforts as well. Through the existing multisectoral support framework, government Ministries and offices coordinating PNDS and other rural development works are informed and be encouraged to prioritize continued rural infrastructure development needs such as connecting rural roads and water distribution system in to the Vanilla “Beans of Hope” (Livelihood Program) locations.

A part from collaboration with government's PNDS project, MMT should also collaborate with PERMATIL to specifically promote contour-based water harvesting or conservation technology in all Vanilla "Beans of Hope" project location regardless of having better access to spring water sources or not. The experiences of PERMATIL water and land conservation projects which the Consultant also previously seen in Oé-cusse Ambeno and Aileu Municipality already, PERMATIL's contour-based water harvesting or conservation technology helped to revitalize existing spring water sites and also positively contributed to erosion control and land degradation problem directly caused by uncontrolled run off on the sloppy areas or erosion due to slash and burns farming system. Since all Coffee and Vanilla are planted in the most sloppy areas, adopting this contour-based water harvesting or conservation technology is very important to reduce water scarcity problems affecting Vanilla plants.

While encouraging parents to improve their Vanilla farming organizational and management capacity and manner, parents shall also be encouraged to continually prioritize their under 5 years old Children opportunity for learning and other basic education supports at home to better prepare under school age Children before entering formal schools. It has become an issue in Timor-Leste government is only promoting Kindergarten schooling at the village level only which often time is very far to reach by parents and under schooling age of Children who live far away from their village center where the kindergarten locates.

During the evaluation, Consultant also observe that none of any Vanilla "Beans of Hope" (Livelihood Program) villages exists a Kindergarten school already except primary school level only. This situation clearly indicates already that as the parents will be more engaged in livelihood activities their times and priority for providing at-home education and learning opportunity for their under - schooling age of children is limited and meaningless. The Consultant hence suggest that other MMT ECCD project also implement their activities in the Vanilla "Beans of Hope" project villages by specifically organize Child friendly Spaces activities to provide learning opportunity while developing learning habit of the Children to be better prepared before entering formal school.

Recently the Government has only launched a so-called 'Eskola Iha Uma (or At Home Schooling) program to be initiated in Dili Municipality as a pilot project still. This project is significantly important to complement the Vanilla "Beans of Hope" project to prevent child labour in Vanilla production works and also importantly to continue provide learning environment opportunity to the children of Vanilla producer families after schooling hours. In doing so, the MMT may consider facilitating the need of this program through the provision of the Vanilla "Beans of Hope" (Livelihood Program) publication materials to be read out and made familiar to under-literacy parents during their child's at Home Schooling hour.

Engagement of members of Village Council in particularly village chiefs, sub-village chiefs, Delegado and Delegada, youth-female and youth-male

representative in the village council are very important in the aspect of community mobilization, project planning and also regular monitoring and evaluation. However, in order to make this sustainable the project needs to train and improve the knowledge of the above members of village council in the area of community-driven development planning and management strategy, creative economy and rural-based SME development strategy shall be potentially placing these key members of village council in the frontline of village community entrepreneurial skills motivation and mobilization supporting roles

#### **6.1.f Expansion of the Project areas Municipality coverage**

It is recommended to also consider expanding this project to other existing vanilla growing Municipalities already in particularly in Ainaro working through the CPMS cooperative whose membership have reached more than 2000 individual producers undertaking vanilla production as their membership obligation aside other multi-sectoral production focus.

The consultant visited more than 5 CPMS' farmers groups back in November 2021 ago in Ainaro as part of another agriculture project designing efforts and was admired by the importance of integrated vanilla-aquaculture, agroforestry and livestock production practices by CPMS farmer groups for an important periods of development efforts already.

Since 2021, the CPMS groups have continuously supplying horticulture and livestock products to government's organized basic food package to families in Timor-Leste where the government and CPMS agreement recommends. When this specific project expansion needs shall be realized, the two Municipalities existing experiences shall complement to one another potentially.

However, the expansion in to another Municipality location shall be realized upon the establishment and confirmation of the best approach and lessons learned in the projects multi-sectoral complementary support as well as upon the establishment of Vanilla strategic market supply chains system which will definitely require a more strengths to fill. Additionally, any expansion implicates organization's operational needs in human resources and financial and shall be based on a proper initial situational analysis and viability assessment.

#### **6.1.g Promotes a potential Integrated Vanilla-Eco-Tourism village**

It is recommended to promote a potential Vanilla-based Rural Eco-Tourism plans and strategy built from the existing capacity which the project beneficiaries possess already. A Vanilla-based Rural Eco-Tourism market in Railaco of the Vanilla "Beans of Hope" project location shall aim to attract a more visit of students, interested farmers, private businesses, local tourist and government staff aiming to learn and improve their understanding and knowledge on how such an outstanding Vanilla productivity and rural-based

economic potential is built by the ordinary vanilla producers hands. It should be designed to encourage and attract those people to visit and have a chance to see their eyes while hears the experiences of local-female Vanilla produces doing Vanilla processing in to perfumes, local wine, tea and other value other value adding. To facilitate and expose students to see how a Vanilla pollination work, vanilla curing and Vanilla planting best practices is undertaken to prepare them for a future specialized education and employment opportunity post graduation.

The Vanilla-based Rural Eco-Tourism plans and strategy is also aimed for connecting ordinary Railaco Vanilla producer families with the outside world society and individuals who might be inspired to come to witness the experiences and talents of specific socio-cultural cohesiveness of the people of Railaco in making this overall organic Vanilla industry booms. Or to attract volunteers or charitable tourist-personalities locally and foreigners who would like to come and spend their quality times with any Vanilla producer family or youth Vanilla producer in Railaco to introduce innovative ways of rural poverty reduction initiative and remedy which ultimately be aimed to strengthen Vanilla producers organizational capacity and manners specifically. Or those who might be inspired to come to visit Railaco to specifically experience a never seen exoticness, a never experienced adventure and experiences of a weekend stay within the convergences in the middle of Vanilla and Coffee bush camping site with such a different climatic and organic environmental quality landscape of Railaco, Ermera before.

However, developing a potential integrated Vanilla-Eco-Tourism village in Railaco requires a correct entry strategy. The Consultant recommends MMT to continue work with BEHAFU Cooperative to initiate the plans and undertake initial consultation to explore and develop the common vision of Vanilla “Beans of Hope” project beneficiaries and general Railaco community on Vanilla-based Rural Eco-Tourism while continually improve and expand BEHAFU card making and business in a new approach. MMT also needs to initiate discussion with Fig Sol Nascente company in Timor-Leste to plan and initiate Vanilla - Fig value adding home industry as part of the BEHAFU Cooperative and MMT promoted roles and within the Vanilla-based Rural Eco-Tourism vision and plans.

There was one visited Vanilla growing site during evaluation which Consultant recommends to establish one Vanilla Farmer Resource Center there to be latter developed and used for a significant demonstration plot of Vanilla production best practices that ultimately be used for Vanilla-based Rural Eco-Tourism visit destination by students and visitors from everywhere of Timor-Leste to experience Vanilla planting and pollination, Vanilla and Coffee bulbs processing in to perfumes; to see and learn about Vanilla - fig fruits and leafs processing in to wine, tea and other value adding products; and for other inspired farmers from other Municipalities to come and get themselves trained on how the best practices of Vanilla production.

The site which is recommended here has its significant strategic location, specific panoramic scenery and available supporting basic infrastructure

such as water and has more than a 1000ha of non-occupant land size availability for the future possible expansion of Vanilla production site and integrated eco-tourism development needs. During the visit to this specific site, Consultant was informed by the farmers there that in the past MMT used this place for the Vanilla “Beans of Hope” project launching ceremony already and nowadays, in this particular farm site too the owner has been continuously developing other horticulture and agroforestry products while expanding the quantity of Vanilla production.

#### **6.1.h Promotes Project Publicity/Visibility and Promotional efforts**

The project lacks publicity and promotional efforts to raise awareness among the larger Timor-Leste society and institutions about promoted investment already. A series of publicity and promotional materials of the Vanilla “Beans of Hope” (Livelihood Program) shall be organized beyond the existing MMT’s internal and external publication but to consider including publication to share change story newsletters, debates and awareness raising through Ermera Community radio on air broadcasting beyond news which will be intended to introduce farmers perceptions, experiences and opinions, which shall be influencing public opinions, support and the project complementary efforts needs. During a consultation visit to MAF’s Ermera Municipality office, Consultant never found any publicity poster and brochure of the Vanilla “Beans of Hope” (Livelihood Program) nor any related promotional materials inside the MAF office already. The MMT also needs to promote the Vanilla “Beans of Hope” (Livelihood Program) promotional materials inside the Village Chief office and community halls of the project location villages as well, at Railaco Schools and Church as part of the project promotion needs.

Organize open lecturer session at the University and in particularly at the Agriculture colleges to introduce the project but also raise awareness and bring closer the attention of the future University or College’s graduates about potential employment and research topic on Vanilla Value Chain which all of these can have potential to influence policy support and business promotions.

## VII. ANNEXES

### 7.1 List of Sites Visited

No	Village (Suco)	Sub-Village (Aldeia)
1	Railaco - Kraik	Sobrequeque
2		Cocoa
3		Reamory
4	Railaco - Leten	Darema
5	Deleço	Bohemeta
6	Taraço	Laquego
7		Datuleo
8	Samalete	Leburema
9		Eraulo
10		Aiurlala

### 7.2 Lists of people Consulted/interviewed through KII\*

No	Name	Institution	Roles
1	H.E. Mr. Elizario Ferreira	State Secretariat for Cooperatives, Timor-Leste	Secretary of State
2	Mr. Donato Salsina Menezes	National Directorate for Coffee and Commercial Agroforestry	National Director
3	Staff - 1	National Directorate for Coffee and Commercial Agroforestry	Technical Staff
4	Staff - 2	National Directorate for Coffee and Commercial Agroforestry	Technical Staff
5	Mr. Jose de Deus	Ermera Municipality of Agriculture Service	Director of Municipality
6	Mr. Joaquim de Fatima Salsinha	Ermera Municipality of Agriculture Service	Head Section of Coffee and Commercial Agroforestry
7	Mr. Armindo Goncalvez	MAF Extension worker	MAF Extension Worker for Railaco - Kraik village
8	Mr. Juvinal Alvez	Institute de Apoio do Desenvolvimento Empresarial (IADE), Timor-Leste	Head Department of Training
9	Mr. Graciano de Jesus	Village Authority	Suco Chief of Taraco
10	Mr. Ananias Martins Hunu	Village Authority	Suco Chief of Deleço

11	Mr. Hermenegildo Madeira Salsina	Village Authority	Suco Chief of Railaco - Kraik
12	Mrs. Olinda Freitas	BEHAFU Cooperative	President of Cooperative
13	Ms. Charlotte Antherton	Mary MacKillop Today, Sidney office	MMT - Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning Coordinator
14	Ms. Agnes Brites Maia	Mary MacKillop Today, Timor-Leste office	MMT Timor-Leste Program Manager
15	Ms. Juliana Mendonca	Mary MacKillop Today, Timor-Leste office	MMT Timor-Leste Livelihood Program Coordinator
16	Ms. Tessa Henwood-Mitchell	Mary MacKillop Today, Sidney office	MMT - International Programs Group Leader
17	Ms. Karen File	Mary MacKillop Today, Sidney office	MMT Sidney office
18	Ms. Emily Faller	Edmund Rice Foundation Australia	ERFA - Programs Director
19	Mr. Basilio Nascimento	Mary MacKillop Today, Timor-Leste office	Learning & Effectiveness/MEL Manager
20	Mr. Pedro Rosa de Jesus	Mary MacKillop Today, Timor-Leste office	Field Based Officer (FBO)
21	Mr. Manuel Borges Sarmento	Mary MacKillop Today, Timor-Leste office	Field Based Officer (FBO)
22	Mrs. Esperansa de Jesus Carvalho		Female-Vanilla Producer
23	Mr. Camilio Felix		Male-Vanilla Producer
24	Mr. Egas dos Santos Andrade		Male-Vanilla Producer
25	Mr. Tiago Bere		Male-Vanilla Producer
26	Mr. Anibal Xavier		Male-Vanilla Producer

\* Names of each individual FGD participant cannot be made available in this report as suggested in the FGD Consent Script criteria already.

## 7.3 Data collection instruments

### a. FGD Consent Script and Form in Tetum

#### **Deklarasaun Konsentimentu no Formatu ba Diskusaun Grupu Alvu**

Servisu Konsultaria atu halo Avaliasaun ba Mary MacKillop Today nia Projetu “Vanilla “beans of Hope” (Programa Livelihood) iha Timor-Leste

#### **I. Informasaun verbal ba deklarasaun Konsentimentu**

*Intervistador (rekolhador dados) sei le'e sai Akordaun ida ne'e ba partisipante (mane ka feto). Halo moris mákina gravasaun áudio atu grava wainhira le'e hela textu deklarasaun ne'e no partisipante ida-idak hato'o sira ida-idak nia aseitasaun.*

Obrigadu wain ba ita-bo'ot sira ida-idak nia hakarak rasik atu hola parti iha intrevista avaliasaun ba Mary MacKillop Today nia Projetu “Vanilla “beans of Hope” (Programa Livelihood).

Hau nia naran **Regio da Cruz Salu** no Hau nudar konsultor (kontratadu tempu badak) ba organizaun Mary MacKillop Today nian. Avaliasaun ida ne'e hakarak buka hatene kona-ba jestaun no estrutura implementasaun ba projetu Vanilla “Beans of Hope” (Livelihood Program) nian duranti tinan 3 nia laran ona (hahú-husi tinan 2019 to'o 2022). Diskusaun ho Grupu Alvu ida ne'e liu-liu atu buka hatene no kumpriende ema sira ne'ebé kuda Vanilla sira nia esperiensa, persepsaun no hanoin sira no benefisiu ne'ebé hetan ona husi projetu ida ne'e, liu-liu atu hatene kona-ba oinsa maka ikus mai ema ne'ebé kuda Vanilla bele sai na'in no hetan dunik benefisiu diak atu bele kontinua nafatin depois Mary MacKillop Today la-hala'o ona projetu ne'e direktamente hahú-husi fulan Juñu 2024 oin mai.

Nudar ema ne'ebé kuda dunik Vanilla ka membru komunidadida ida iha fatn projetu Vanilla “Beans of Hope” (Livelihood Program) ida ne'e hala'o ba, Ita-bo'ot nia prespetiva importanti dunik iha ne'ebé Hau hakarak atu rona dunik. Sei kuandu Ita-bo'ot aseita atu partisipa iha intrevista ida ne'e, ami sei iha diskusaun ho ita-bo'ot no membru sira seluk iha grupu ida ne'e duranti maizumenus minutu 75 to'o 90 minutos deit. Ita sei kualia deit ba asuntu sira ne'ebé ami prepara tiha ona atu kualia ho Ita-bo'ot.

**Hola parti iha Avaliasaun projetu ida ne'e completamente Voluntáriu.** Sei laiha multa ruma kuandu Ita-bo'ot lakoi atu hola parti. No mos, Ita-bo'ot karik lakoi atu hatan ba pergunta ruma. Ida ne'e laiha buat ruma hasoru Ita-bo'ot. Rekuñese mos katak sei laiha benefisiu imediatu ruma wainhira Ita-bo'ot hola parti iha intrevista ida ne'e, maibe, Ita-bo'ot nia esperiensa rasik nudar kontribuisaun ida ne'ebé iha dunik valor ne'ebé aas tebes atu bele hadian jestaun no kapasidadi industria produsaun Vanilla iha Timor-Leste.

**Privasidadi.** Tanba ita nia intrevista ne'e iha gruou, ami labele garante katak partisipante sira seluk iha grupu ne'e sei kaer segredu kona-ba saida maka Ita-bo'ot kualia ona. Atu bele hamenus risku hanesan ne'e, ami husu deit ba partisipanti ida-idak atu respeita nafatin privasidadi partisipante sira seluk nian no labele lori sai ba liur saida maka partisipanti ruma kualia iha intrevista ida ne'e. Wainhira ema hotu bele kaer nafatin segredu ba saida maka diskuti tiha ona, entaun partisipante sira ida-idak bele senti libre wainhira kualia kona-ba sira nia esperiensa ida-idak nian. Karik Ita-bo'ot sira ida-idak aseita dunik ho maneira ida hanesan Hau temi ona ne'e? Karik partisipanti ruma hakarak husu buat ruma?

*Tenki fó tempu no oportunidadi ba diskusaun temu badak ruma enkuantu presija atu esklarese kona-ba asuntu ida ne'e.*

Hau ho Hau nia kolega sira ne'ebé halo avaliasaun ida ne'e promete atu labele espalha ita-bo'ot sira nia informasaun pesoal no resposta ne'ebé ita-bo'ot hato'o ona. Ami sei hakerek ita-bo'ot sira nia opiniaun no saida maka partisipante hotu nian hanoin hela duranti sesaun nia lalaok. **Ami sei lahusu Ita-bo'ot sira nia naran ida-idak.** Informasuan hotu ne'ebé rekolha ba avaliasaun ida ne'e sei fahe deit ba funsionariu sira ne'ebé serbisu ba projetu Vanilla “Beans of Hope” (Livelihood Program). Maski nune'e **Ami sei la-inklui informasaun ruma iha ami nian minuta sira ne'ebé sei bele halo ema seluk ruma rekuñese Ita-bo'ot no saida maka Ita-bo'ot hateten sai tiha**

**ona.** Dadus no informasaun hotu husi avaliasaun ida ne'e sei rai didiak no seguru no ekipa avaliador xávi nian deit maka bele hatene.

**Konsentimentu kona-ba gravasaun no fotografia :** Sei karik Ita-bo'ot aseita, Hau sei grava konversa ne'ebé sei halo no mos hasai fotografia husi partisipante sira. Ida ne'e halo atu bele garante katak opiniões hotu-hotu gravadu no dokumentadu ho didiak ba analiza tuir mai bassa kuandu hakerek liman deit duranti konversa hirak ne'e ami sei labele akapta hotu saida maka partisipante ida-idak kualia. Fotografia hotu ne'ebé foti ona sei uza atu halo relatóriu avaliasaun ida ne'e no mos sei uza atu halo publikasaun ofisiál internal no external Mary organziasaun MacKillop Today nian deit. Sei kuandu Ita-bo'ot aseita Hau sei husu nafatin Ita-bo'ot atu asina dokumentu konsentimentu kona-ba gravasaun no fotografia. Ita-bo'ot sira aseita dunik kalae?

**Sei karik ema ruma la-aseita:** Ne'e laiha problema ruma, Ami sei rekuñese ida ne'e nafatin.

**Agora Ita-bo'ot bele husu:** Karik depois maka Ita-bo'ot hakarak husu *ka* hato'o preokupasaun ruma, bele liga ba funsionáriu projetu Vanilla "Beans of Hope" (Livelihood Program) nian. Sira nia numeru kontaktus telefónica maka 76144576 no 75975654.

*Hau hakarak aproveita minutu balun atu kontinua husu karik Ita-bo'ot ida-idak aseita atu partisipa:*

**Deklarasaun Konsentimentu:** Hau nia preguntas responde tiha ona. Hau aseita atu hola parti iha Diskusaun Grupu Alvu ba avaliasaun projetu ida ne'e.

Partisipante 1:	<input type="checkbox"/> Mane	<input type="checkbox"/> Feto	<input type="checkbox"/> SIM	<input type="checkbox"/> LAE
Partisipante 2:	<input type="checkbox"/> Mane	<input type="checkbox"/> Feto	<input type="checkbox"/> SIM	<input type="checkbox"/> LAE
Partisipante 3:	<input type="checkbox"/> Mane	<input type="checkbox"/> Feto	<input type="checkbox"/> SIM	<input type="checkbox"/> LAE
Partisipante 4:	<input type="checkbox"/> Mane	<input type="checkbox"/> Feto	<input type="checkbox"/> SIM	<input type="checkbox"/> LAE
Partisipante 5:	<input type="checkbox"/> Mane	<input type="checkbox"/> Feto	<input type="checkbox"/> SIM	<input type="checkbox"/> LAE
Partisipante 6:	<input type="checkbox"/> Mane	<input type="checkbox"/> Feto	<input type="checkbox"/> SIM	<input type="checkbox"/> LAE
Partisipante 7:	<input type="checkbox"/> Mane	<input type="checkbox"/> Feto	<input type="checkbox"/> SIM	<input type="checkbox"/> LAE

Aseita atu grava? ☐ SIM ☐ LAE

**Asina deklarasaun Konsentimentu kona-ba gravasaun no fotografia?** ☐ SIM ☐ LAE

Ema ne'ebé halo intrevista \_\_\_\_\_

Asinatura \_\_\_\_\_

Data \_\_\_\_\_

## **b.KII Consent Script and Form in Tetum**

### **Deklarasaun Konsentimentu no Formatu ba Intrevista ho Individu**

Servisu Konsultaria atu halo Avaliasaun ba Mary MacKillop Today nia Projetu "Vanilla "beans of Hope" (Programa Livelihood) iha Timor-Leste

#### **I. Informasaun verbal ba deklarasaun Konsentimentu - intrevista ho ema pessoal**

*Intrevistador sei le'e sai ba ema ne'ebé hetan intrevista. Hamoris ona mákina gravasaun áudio digital ka mákina gravasaun áudio seluk atu grava wainhira le'e textu deklarasu ne'e no wainhira eme ne'ebé hetan intrevista deklara aseita ona.*

Obrigadu wain tanba ho hakarak rasik atu hola parti iha avaliasaun ba projetu Vanilla "Beans of Hope (Livelihood Program) husi MARY MacKillop, Today.

My name is **Regio da Cruz Salu** and I work as a consultant with Mary MacKillop Today. The evaluation is intended to assess the overall management and structure of the Vanilla "Beans

of Hope” (Livelihood Program) over the last 3 years (2019 - 2022), particularly focusing on the potential for the project to be owned by local people and for benefits to continue after Mary MacKillop Today exits in June 2024.

Hau nia naran Regio da Cruz Salu no Hau nudar konsultor (kontratadu tempu badak) ba organizasaun Mary MacKillop Today nian. Avaliasaun ida ne'e hakarak buka hatene kona-ba jestaun no estrutura implementasaun ba projetu Vanilla “Beans of Hope” (Livelihood Program) nian duranti tinan 3 nia laran ona (hahú-husi tinan 2019 to'o 2022) liu-liu hatene kona-ba oinsa maka ikus mai ema ne'ebé kuda Vanilla bele sai na'in no hetan dunik benefísiu diak atu bele kontinua nafatin depois Mary MacKillop Today la-hala'o ona projetu ne'e direktamente hahú-husi fulan Juñu 2024 oin mai.

Nu'udar (Xefe ka matenek nain ka parseirus NGO ka produtor Vanilla), ita-bo'ot nia presepsaun ne'e importanti tebes dunik ba ami atu bele hatene. Sei karik ita-bo'ot aseita dunik atu hila parti iha intrevista ida ne'e, hau sei halo diskusaun ho ita-bo'ot duranti minutu 60 deit. Ita sei kualai deit ba asuntus ne'ebé hau prepara ona atu kualia ho ita-bo'ot.

Hau kompromete atu labele espalha ita-bo'ot sira nia informasaun pesoal no resposta ne'ebé ita-bo'ot hato'o ona. **Hau sei lahakerek ita-bo'ot nian naran.** Informasaun hotu ne'ebé rekolha ba avaliasaun ida ne'e sei fahe deit ba Mary MacKillop Today, projetu Vanilla “Beans of Hope” (Livelihood Program). Maski nune'e **Hau sei la-inklui informasaun ruma iha ami nian minuta sira ne'ebé sei bele halo ema seluk ruma rekuñese Ita-bo'ot no saida maka Ita-bo'ot hateten sai tiha ona.** Dadus no informasaun hotu husi avaliasaun ida ne'e sei rai didiak ho seguru no ekipa avaliador xávi Mary MacKillop Today nian deit maka bele hatene.

Sei karik ita-bo'ot aseita, Hau sei grava konversa ida ne'e. Ida ne'e atu garante katak buat informasaun hotu ne'ebé ita-bo'ot kualai sei akapta didiak tanba dalaruma Hau labele hakerek hotu saida maka ita-bo'ot kualai duranti intrevista ne'e. Ita-bo'ot aseita?

**Sei ita-bo'ot la-aseita:** Laiha problema ruma, Hau sei kontinua kunsidera ida ne'e. Karik ita-bo'ot hakarak husu buat ruma antes ita kontinua?

**Deklarasaun Konsentimentu:** Hau nia pergunta hatan tiha ona. Hau aseita atu hola parti iha intrevista ba avalaisaunn projetu ida ne'e.

Priense ida ne'ebé hili:

- |   |                               |
|---|-------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> SIM  | <input type="checkbox"/> LAE  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mane   | <input type="checkbox"/> Feto |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Oficial Guvernu  |                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parseiru I/NGO   |                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Produtor Vanilla   |                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Komprador/Kompañia Vanilla                                     |                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> FBO/finsionariu projetu  |                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Funsionariu Mary MacKillop Today staff (Dili no Sidney office) |                               |

Aseita atu grava? ☐ SIM ☐ LAE

Ema ne'ebé halo intrevista \_\_\_\_\_

Asinatura \_\_\_\_\_

Data \_\_\_\_\_

### **c. KII Guide - Government of Timor-Leste Representative**

**Vanilla “Beans of Hope” (Livelihood Program) in Ermera Municipality, 2019 – 2022, End Progress Project Evaluation**

\_\_\_\_\_ (FGD Category) \_\_\_\_\_ (Date)

Participant Official Role:

Sex:

Participant Mobile Number:

**I. Informed Consent Process (~15 minutes)**

*Interviewer will read the oral informed consent script to the participant. Turn on the digital platform's audio recorder or the physical audio recorder to capture the informed consent being read and the interviewee agreeing to it.*

Do you have any questions? [Pause for response; answer any questions.]

Do you agree to participate in this Key Informant Interview? [check] Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Do you agree to audio record the Interview? [check] Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer (s) Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**For GOTL officials from the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MAF) - Directorate of Agroforestry and Coffee or related Department:**

No	Questions	Answers
1	Please explain briefly about your department's key roles and your Department/Ministry plans to prioritize and support Commercial Agroforestry development and specifically in Vanilla Agribusiness.	
2	Are there adequate Government resources being allocated to your Department implementing those plans? Please specify,	
3	How does your department collaborate with other government bodies, NGOs, and/or the private sector to support agroforestry and Agribusiness?	
4	Does your Department currently organize or implement Vanilla or any Commercial Agroforestry project? a. If the answer "Yes" where, what are the objectives and how long for? b. If the answer "No", are you aware of the existing cooperation between MAF and the Mary MacKillop Today for the Vanilla "Beans of Hope" (Livelihood Program) in Ermera Municipality?	
5	How will your Department organize or implement Vanilla or any Commercial Agroforestry project? Please provide details,	
6	What incentives or facilities which the MAF or your Department would provide to promote Vanilla or any Commercial Agroforestry project farmers?	
7	What are the key requirement for your department/MAF in order to support and manage Vanilla or other Commercial Agroforestry project investment effective and sustainable?	
8	Do you have other observations or thoughts to contribute before we conclude?	

**For GOTL officials from the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries - Directorate of Agribusiness and Private Sector Cooperation or related Department:**

No	Questions	Answers
1	Please explain briefly about your department's key roles and your Department/Ministry plans to prioritize and support Agribusiness development.	
2	How does your department collaborate with other government bodies, NGOs, and/or the private sector to support Agribusiness development?	
3	What incentives or facilities which the MAF or your Department would provide to promote Agribusiness Value Chain project to farmers and private sector?	
4	Are you aware of the existing cooperation between MAF and the Mary MacKillop Today for the Vanilla "Beans of Hope" (Livelihood Program) in Ermera Municipality?  a. If the answer "Yes", what your department will do to support and manage Vanilla Agribusiness Value Chain project	
5	Are there adequate Government resources being allocated to implementing those plans?	
6	What are the key requirement for your department/MAF in order to support and manage Vanilla or other Commercial Agroforestry project investment effective and sustainable?	
7	How your department/the government will promote and sustain the existing Vanilla "Beans of Hope" (Livelihood Program)?	
8	Do you have other observations or thoughts to contribute before we conclude?	

**For GOTL officials from the National Directorate of Cooperatives or related Department:**

No	Questions	Answers
1	Please explain briefly about your department's key roles Cooperatives development in Timor-Leste.	
2	Your Department has signed an MOU with the Mary MacKillop Today to support Vanilla producer farmers under the Vanilla "Beans of Hope" (Livelihood Program) in Railaco, Ermera Municipality. What are the next step plans and specific actions to promote that established Multi-Sectoral Cooperative already?	
3	What are the key requirement for your department in order to regularly implement those plans and specific activities supporting the established Multi-sectoral Cooperative members?	
4	Are there adequate Government resources being allocated to implementing your Department's plans?	
5	Who is your specific Department working in	

	this area?	
6	Have it has operation in the Municipality and village level?	
7	Do you have other observations or thoughts to contribute before we conclude?	

**For GOTL officials from the Institute for Business Development Support (IADE):**

**For GOTL officials from Ermera Municipality MAF Officer:**

No	Questions	Answers
1	Please explain briefly about your department's key roles and specifically in providing business development support to Farmers or Cooperative groups.	
2	Your Department has signed an MOU with the Mary MacKillop Today to support Vanilla producer farmers under the Vanilla "Beans of Hope" (Livelihood Program) in Railaco, Ermera Municipality. What are the next steps and what specific business development support will your department provide to Vanilla producer farmers?	
3	Are there adequate Government resources being allocated to your Department to implementing the plans?	
4	Who is your specific Department working in this area?	
5	Have it has operation in the Municipality and village level?	
6	What your Department additionally needs to promote and support Vanilla farmers Business development potentially?	
7	Do you have other observations or thoughts to contribute before we conclude?	

**For GOTL officials from Ermera Municipality MAF Officer:**

No	Questions	Answers
1	Please explain briefly about your department's key roles and specifically in providing support to coffee and Vanilla production in Ermera Municipality.	
2	Are you aware or ever worked with the Vanilla "Beans of Hope" (Livelihood Program) in Railaco, Ermera Municipality organized by the Mary MacKillop Today? If the answer "Yes" what are the issues and problems needed to be minimized or resolved to improve Vanilla farming productivity and sustainability?	
3	What are specific incentive support which your Department provide to Coffee or Vanilla farmers to increase productivity?	
4	Do you have significant human resources in place to support Vanilla farmers?	
5	Are there adequate Government resources being allocated to your Department to	

	support your department works in the field?	
6	What your Department additionally needs to promote and support Vanilla farmers Business development potentially?	
7	Do you have other observations or thoughts to contribute before we conclude?	

**For GOTL officials from Ermera Municipality MAF Extension workers:**

No	Questions	Answers
1	Can you tell me a little bit about typical agriculture extension works which you are tasked to do in rural areas?	
2	What specific extension support you normally provide to coffee and Vanilla farmer producer in Ermera?	
3	How often you visited and provide extension support to Vanilla producers farmers organized by the Mary MacKillop Today in Railaco? Where?	
4	What are the issues and problems you have normally observed on the overall Vanilla farming in Ermera Municipality?	
5	What are the issues What are specific technical skills and knowledge in Vanilla production which you don't have with you in order to better assist Vanilla farmers in Railaco?	
6	What facilities which your Department provide to support your work with the farmers regularly?	
7	What additional support you still need to properly support Vanilla farmers to increase productivity and sustainability of Vanilla farming?	
8	Do you have other observations or thoughts to contribute before we conclude?	

*Thank you again for your participation in this discussion. Your observations, knowledge, and thoughts are important contributions to the findings and subsequent recommendations for Vanilla "Beans of Hope" (Livelihood Program).*

*"Could we follow-up with you about potentially confirming additional information and clarification we may still need?"*

**d.KII Guide for Vanilla Producing Villages' Authorities (Village/Sub-Village Chiefs)**

**Vanilla "Beans of Hope" (Livelihood Program) in Ermera Municipality, 2019 – 2022, End**

**Progress Project Evaluation**

\_\_\_\_\_ (Village/Suconame) \_\_\_\_\_ (FGD  
Category) \_\_\_\_\_ (Date)

Participant Age:

Sex:

Participant Mobile Phone #:

**I. Informed Consent Process (~15 minutes)**

Interviewer relays the oral informed consent script to participants and obtains verbal informed consent from each participant before continuing with the focus group.

Do you have any questions? [Pause for response; answer any questions.]

Do you agree to participate in this Key Informant Interview? [check] Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Do you agree to audio record the Interview? [check] Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer (s) Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Question and Answer (~60 minutes)**

No	Questions	Responses
1	How many Household families in your Suco?	
2	How many families of Your Suco who have involved in Vanilla farming activity?	
3	How many particular Aldeias (sub-villages) with Vanilla farming activity? Where?	
4	Who works mostly in the Vanilla farming activity? Why?	
5	How often you visited Villages/Sub-villages with Vanilla farming activity?	
6	What was the objectives and what the issues and problems and risks you have normally found during the visit?	
7	What would be done immediately to minimize or resolve the problems you found?	
8	What typical change which you have seen at Vanilla farming village/families? Please provide an example?	
9	How Vanilla farming have directly affecting the economy of families in your village?	
10	What is your recommendation to increase productivity and sustainability of Vanilla farming in your village?	
11	Have there any particular support or incentives which the Government or your office provide to Families involved in Vanilla farming activity in your village?	
12	Has your village authority in application of any rules and policy to facilitate Vanilla farming production in your village? Please specify if any	

13	What would you like to see the future of your village and families in Vanilla farming and industry?	
14	Are there other potential opportunities to be developed to improve nutrition and living standard of families in your village? If the answer "Yes" Please specify?	
15	Do you have another thing to say before we conclude?	

#### e. FGD Guide - Adult-Female Vanilla Producers

##### Vanilla "Beans of Hope" (Livelihood Program) in Ermera Municipality, 2019 – 2022, End Progress Project Evaluation

\_\_\_\_\_ (Village/Suco name) \_\_\_\_\_ (Name of FGD Category) \_\_\_\_\_ (Date)

Participants Code and Age:

#### I. Informed Consent Process (~15 minutes)

*Interviewer relays the oral informed consent script to participants and obtains verbal informed consent from each participant before continuing with the focus group.*

Do you have any questions? [Pause for response; answer any questions.]

Do you agree to participate in this Focus Group Discussion? [check] Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Do you agree to audio record the Discussion? [check] Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer (s) Name: \_\_\_\_\_

#### II. Question and Answer (~75-90 minutes)

##### **Basic Information**

1. What are the typical income generating activities which most of the women in your village do?
2. How long have your family grow Vanilla?
3. What has encouraged your family to involve in the Vanilla farming?
4. Do you work with or seen a people with disability in Vanilla farming?
  - a. If the answer "Yes" how S/he works for the Vanilla farming? Give a detail,
  - b. If the answer "Yes" where can we find Him/Her?

##### **Specific Roles in Vanilla Farming**

5. What are the specific typically works demand for Women to do in Vanilla farming activity:
  - Deciding and Procuring Vanilla seed
  - Preparing Vanilla Nursery
  - Preparing and cleaning Farm to be planted
  - Planting or Constructing Vanilla protective plants or climbing poles,
  - Vanilla planting
  - Embroidery,
  - Weeding,
  - Regulating Vanilla tendrils and propagation,
  - Pruning,
  - Pollinating Vanilla flowers and for how long it takes
  - Fertilizing,

- Vanilla harvesting and post-harvest,
  - Others\_\_\_\_\_ (Please specify)
6. How many hours a day that women have to perform specific roles in Vanilla farming activity?
  7. What have made women's specific role in Vanilla farming activity more easier to this end?
  8. What is still needed to better support Women's work in Vanilla farming easily?
  9. Have the Children under 10 years old also joined the parents to do Vanilla farming activity?
  10. If the answer is "Yes", what the Children normally do?

### **Institutional Support**

11. Have your family involved with any Vanilla farming group organization so far?
12. Do you also involve in the Vanilla farming organization membership and leadership? If the answer "No", Why?
13. What is your specific roles and obligation in that Vanilla farming organization you have involved with?
14. How that Vanilla farming organization has supported you and affected your Vanilla farming activity and benefits?
15. What have been the issues and problems when involving with that Vanilla farming organization?
16. What should be the ideal roles and support which that Vanilla farming organization make to support women's role and Vanilla farming is more profitable and sustainable?
17. Have you ever received any particular support from the government? If the answer "Yes", Please specify,
18. Which area of the important support from Vanilla "Beans of Hope" (Livelihood Program) that you think should be continued to better support women's role in Vanilla farming? Please specify,
19. What specific additional technical training needs to supporting Women - Vanilla farmers producers in your village to increased productivity and business? Please specify.

### **Investment**

20. How much of your own family money have been specifically invested in Vanilla farming (USD) so far?
21. What did your family mostly use that amount of money for e.g. labour, inputs, etc?
22. Have your family taken out any loans to finance Vanilla farming?, if so how much (USD)?
23. Where have your family received your loans from? (e.g, Banks, Micro-finance facility, Group Saving and Loans product, individual loan provider),
24. What are the issues and problems with loans access and repayments? Please specify,
25. Aside financial need, how and from where do you source your other required inputs regularly/easily?

### **Issues, Challenges and Risks**

26. What are the most concerned issues which limit women involvement in regular Vanilla farming activity?
27. What are the most concerned other institutional (social, economy and market) and environmental issues and risks that will affect your vanilla farming production and business? (e.g. tropical cyclones, lacks of water, flooding, insects, stealing, etc.) Please specify?
28. Have your family ever experienced Vanilla harvest failures? If the answer "Yes" ask for specific reason, why,

### **Business and Marketing**

29. How and where your family and other farmers in your community sell their Vanilla produces?
30. How the Vanilla sales is arranged through Vanilla farming organization which you or your family involved with?
31. What are the significant problems and issues faced in marketing your harvested Vanilla beans?
32. Have the cost of Vanilla sales different among the farmers within your community? If the answer "Yes", please specific the reasons,
33. What are still needed to make the Vanilla business and market more profitable and sustainable,
34. Are there other opportunities available which you believe could potentially continue provide your family's economic income while involving in Vanilla farming?

### **Closing**

35. What would you like to see for Women's roles and benefits in Vanilla farming better?
36. What are other recommendations to increase Vanilla production and productivity at your farm?

## **f. FGD Guide - Adult-Male Vanilla Producers**

### **Vanilla "Beans of Hope" (Livelihood Program) in Ermera Municipality, 2019 – 2022, End Progress Project Evaluation**

\_\_\_\_\_ (Village/Suco name) \_\_\_\_\_ (FGD Category) \_\_\_\_\_ (Date)

Participants Code and Age:

#### **I. Informed Consent Process** (~15 minutes)

*Interviewer relays the oral informed consent script to participants and obtains verbal informed consent from each participant before continuing with the focus group.*

Do you have any questions? [Pause for response; answer any questions.]

Do you agree to participate in this Focus Group Discussion? [check] Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Do you agree to audio record the Discussion? [check] Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer (s) Name: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **II. Question and Answer** (~75-90 minutes)

##### **Basic Information**

- 1.
2. How long have your family grow Vanilla?
3. What has encouraged your family to involve in the Vanilla farming?
4. How many times have your family harvested your Vanilla beans so far?
5. Do you work with or seen a people with disability in Vanilla farming?
6. If the answer "Yes" how S/he works for the Vanilla farming? Give a detail,
7. If the answer "Yes" where can we find Him/Her?

##### **Specific Roles in Vanilla Farming**

7. What are the most demanding works in the Vanilla farm which requires you to work intensively during a whole week time?
  - Deciding and Procuring Vanilla seed
  - Preparing Vanilla Nursery
  - Preparing and cleaning Farm to be planted
  - Planting or Constructing Vanilla protective plants or climbing poles,
  - Vanilla planting

- Embroidery,
- Weeding,
- Regulating Vanilla tendrils and propagation,
- Pruning,
- Pollinating Vanilla flowers and for how long it takes
- Fertilizing,
- Vanilla harvesting and post-harvest,
- Other \_\_\_\_\_ (Please specify)

8. What have made your specific role demand in Vanilla farming activity more easier?
9. What are still need to better support your work in Vanilla farming easily?
10. Have you or your family benefit the most from the Vanilla farming? If the answers “Yes” or “No” Why? (ask to provide specific examples if any),

### **Institutional Support**

11. Have your family involved with any Vanilla farming organization so far? If Yes, please specify name and objective,
12. Do you also involve in the Vanilla farming organization membership and leadership? If the answer “No”, Why?
13. What is your specific roles and obligation in that Vanilla farming organization you have involved with?
14. How that Vanilla farming organization has supported and affected your Vanilla farming activity and benefits?
15. What have been the issues and problems when involving with that Vanilla farming organization?
16. What should be the ideal roles and support which that Vanilla farming organization make to support your Vanilla farming is more profitable and sustainable?
17. Have you ever received any particular support from the government? If the answer “Yes”, Please specify
18. Which area of the important support from Vanilla “Beans of Hope” (Livelihood Program) that you think should be continued to better develop your Vanilla farming? Please specify,
19. What specific additional technical training needs to supporting yours and other Vanilla farmers producers in your village to increased productivity and business? Please specify.

### **Investment**

20. How much of your own family money have been specifically invested in Vanilla farming (USD) so far?
21. What did your family mostly use that amount of money for e.g. labour, inputs, etc?
22. Have your family taken out any loans to finance Vanilla farming?, if so how much (USD)?
23. Where have your family received your loans from? (e.g, Banks, Micro-finance facility, Group Saving and Loans product, individual loan provider)
24. What are the issues and problems with loans access and repayments? Please specify
25. Aside financial support, how and from where do you source your other required inputs regularly/easily?

### **Issues, Challenges and Risks**

26. What are the most concerned issues which limit your involvement and works in regular Vanilla farming activity?
27. What are the most concerned other institutional (social, economy and market) and environmental issues and risks that will affect your vanilla farming production and business? (e.g. tropical cyclones, lacks of water, flooding, insects, stealing, etc.) Please specify?
28. Have your family ever experienced Vanilla harvest failures? If the answer “Yes” ask for specific reason, why,

### **Business and Marketing**

29. How and where your family and other farmers in your community sell their Vanilla produces?
30. How the Vanilla sales is arranged through Vanilla farming organization which you have involved with?
31. What are the significant problems and issues you faced in marketing your harvested Vanilla beans?
32. Have the cost of Vanilla sales different among the farmers within your community? If the answer "Yes", please specific the reasons,
33. What are still needed to make the Vanilla business and market more profitable and sustainable,
34. Are there other opportunities available which you believe could potentially continue provide your family's economic income while involving in Vanilla farming?

### **Closing**

35. 41. What are the recommendations to increase Vanilla production and productivity at your farm?

## **g.FGD Guide - Youth-Male Vanilla Producers**

### **Vanilla "Beans of Hope" (Livelihood Program) in Ermera Municipality, 2019 – 2022, End Progress Project Evaluation**

\_\_\_\_\_ (Village/Suco name) \_\_\_\_\_ (FGD Category) \_\_\_\_\_ (Date)

Participants Code and Age:

#### **I. Informed Consent Process** (~15 minutes)

*Interviewer relays the oral informed consent script to participants and obtains verbal informed consent from each participant before continuing with the focus group.*

Do you have any questions? [Pause for response; answer any questions.]

Do you agree to participate in this Focus Group Discussion? [check] Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Do you agree to audio record the Discussion? [check] Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer (s) Name: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **II. Question and Answer** (~75-90 minutes)

1. What is your current occupation?
2. Do your family own Vanilla farming?
  - a. If the answer "Yes", how long your family have involved in Vanilla farming?
3. Do you specifically own a Vanilla farming individually/as youth group ownership/or assisting the parents only?
4. What has encouraged you and your family to involve in the Vanilla farming?
5. Do you work with or seen a people with disability in Vanilla farming?
  - a. If the answer "Yes" how S/he works for the Vanilla farming? Give a details,
  - b. If the answer "Yes" where can we find Him/Her?s

#### **Specific Roles in Vanilla Farming**

6. What are the typical work which you are required to do in Vanilla farming activity:
  - Deciding and Procuring Vanilla seed
  - Preparing Vanilla Nursery
  - Preparing and cleaning Farm to be planted
  - Planting or Constructing Vanilla protective plants or climbing poles,
  - Vanilla planting
  - Embroidery,
  - Weeding,

- Regulating Vanilla tendrils and propagation,
- Pruning,
- Pollinating Vanilla flowers and for how long it takes
- Fertilizing,
- Vanilla harvesting and post-harvest,
- Others \_\_\_\_\_ (Please specify),

7. How often you are required to do specific work in the Vanilla Farming?
8. Who will accompany and support you when performing those important roles?
9. What mostly encourages you to still continue work in Vanilla farming to this end?
10. Have you and your family benefit the most from the Vanilla farming? If the answers "Yes" or "No" Why? (ask to provide specific examples if any),
11. What you still need to better support your specific works in Vanilla farming activity easily?

### **Institutional Support**

12. Have your family involved in any Vanilla farming group organization so far? If Yes, please specify name and objective,
13. Have you also involved in any Vanilla farming organization membership and leadership? If the answer "No", Why?
12. What is your specific roles and obligation in that Vanilla farming organization you have involved with?
13. How that Vanilla farming organization has supported you and affected your family Vanilla farming activity and benefits?
14. What have been the issues and problems when involving with that Vanilla farming organization?
15. What should be the ideal roles and support which that Vanilla farming organization make to support you and your family Vanilla farming is more profitable and sustainable?
16. Have you received any particular support from the government? If the answer "Yes", Please specify,
17. Which area of the important support from Vanilla "Beans of Hope" (Livelihood Program) that you think should be continued to better support you in Vanilla farming activity? Please specify,
18. What specific additional technical training needs to supporting youth's roles better to participate and increase Vanilla farming to increased productivity and business? Please specify.

### **Investment**

19. How much of your own family money have been invested in Vanilla farming (USD)?
20. What did you or your family mostly use that amount of money for e.g. labour, inputs, etc?
21. Have you or your family taken out any loans to finance Vanilla farming?, if so how much (USD)?
22. Where have you or your family received your loans from? (e.g, Banks, Micro-finance facility, Group Saving and Loans product, individual loan provider),
23. What are the issues and problems with loans access and repayments? Please specify,

### **Issues, Challenges and Risks**

24. What are the most concerned issues and problems which limit Youth's involvement in potential Vanilla farming activity?
25. What have you or your family specifically done to reduce or resolve those issues and problems potentially?

26. What are the most concerned other institutional (social, economy and market) and environmental issues and risks that will affect your family vanilla farming production and business? (e.g. tropical cyclones, lacks of water, flooding, insects, stealing, etc.) Please specify?
27. Have you or your family ever experienced Vanilla harvest failures? If the answer "Yes" ask when and for specific reason, why,

### **Business and Marketing**

28. How and where your family and other farmers in your community sell their Vanilla produces?
29. How the Vanilla sales is arranged through Vanilla organization which you or your family involved with?
30. What and How the Cost of Vanilla sales is decided?
31. What are the significant problems and issues which you or your family have faced or experienced in marketing your harvested Vanilla beans?
32. What are the efforts which have been made to minimize or resolve the problems and issues affecting Vanilla Market?
33. Do you think that the amount of income earned by Vanilla sales have significantly changed your family and your live easily? If so, in what way?
34. What are the significant problems and issues which you or your family have faced or experienced in Vanilla marketing?
35. Have the cost of Vanilla sales different among the farmers within your community? If the answer "Yes", please specific the reasons,
36. What are still needed to make the Vanilla business and market more profitable and sustainable in your community?
37. How decision-making for Vanilla sales have been jointly decided with your parents or among involved family members in Vanilla farming activity?
38. Are there other opportunities available which you believe could potentially continue provide your family's economic income while involving in Vanilla farming?

### **Closing**

39. What are the recommendations to increase Vanilla production and productivity in your village?
40. What are your aspirations for youth future in Vanilla farming industry?

## **h.FGD Guide - Youth-Female Vanilla Producers**

### **Vanilla "Beans of Hope" (Livelihood Program) in Ermera Municipality, 2019 – 2022, End Progress Project Evaluation**

\_\_\_\_\_ (Village/Suco name) \_\_\_\_\_ (FGD Category) \_\_\_\_\_ (Date)

Participants Code and Age:

#### **I. Informed Consent Process (~15 minutes)**

*Interviewer relays the oral informed consent script to participants and obtains verbal informed consent from each participant before continuing with the focus group.*

Do you have any questions? [Pause for response; answer any questions.]

Do you agree to participate in this Focus Group Discussion? [check] Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Do you agree to audio record the Discussion? [check] Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer (s) Name: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **II. Question and Answer (~75-90 minutes)**

##### ***Basic Information***

1. What is your current occupation?
2. Do your family own Vanilla farming?
  - a. If the answer "Yes", how long your family have involved in Vanilla farming?
3. Do you specifically own a Vanilla farming individually/as youth group ownership/or assisting the parents only?
4. What has encouraged you and your family to continue involve in the Vanilla farming?
5. Do you work with or seen a people with disability in Vanilla farming?
  - a. If the answer "Yes" how S/he works for the Vanilla farming? Give a details,
  - b. If the answer "Yes" where can we find Him/Her?s

### ***Specific Roles in Vanilla Farming***

6. What are the typical works which you are required to do in Vanilla farming activity:
  - Deciding and Procuring Vanilla seed
  - Preparing Vanilla Nursery
  - Preparing and cleaning Farm to be planted
  - Planting or Constructing Vanilla protective plants or climbing poles,
  - Vanilla planting
  - Embroidery,
  - Weeding,
  - Regulating Vanilla tendrils and propagation,
  - Pruning,
  - Pollinating Vanilla flowers and for how long it takes
  - Fertilizing,
  - Vanilla harvesting and post-harvest,
  - Others \_\_\_\_\_(Please specify)
7. How often you are required to do specific work in the Vanilla Farming?
8. Who will accompany and support you when performing those important roles?
9. Have you and your family benefit the most from the Vanilla farming? If the answers "Yes" or "No" Why? (ask to provide specific examples if any),
10. What you still need to better support your specific works in Vanilla farming activity easily?

### **Institutional Support**

11. Have your family involved in any Vanilla farming organization group so far? If Yes, please specify name and objective,
12. Have you also involved in any Vanilla farming organization membership and leadership? If the answer "No", Why?
13. What is your specific roles and obligation in that Vanilla farming organization which you have involved with?
14. How that Vanilla farming organization has supported you and affected your family Vanilla farming activity and benefits?
15. What have been the issues and problems when involving with that Vanilla farming organization?
16. What should be the ideal roles and support which that Vanilla farming organization make to support women's role and Vanilla farming is more profitable and sustainable?
17. Have you ever received any particular support from the government? If the answer "Yes", Please specify,
18. Which area of the important support from Vanilla "Beans of Hope" (Livelihood Program) that you think should be continued to better support women's roles in Vanilla farming? Please specify,
19. What specific additional technical training needs to supporting women and youth's roles better to participate and increase Vanilla farming productivity and business? Please specify.

### **Investment**

20. How much of your own family money have been invested in Vanilla farming (USD)?
21. What did your family mostly use that amount of money for e.g. labour, inputs, etc?
22. Have your family taken out any loans to finance Vanilla farming?, if so how much (USD)?
23. Where have your family received your loans from? (e.g, Banks, Micro-finance facility, Group Saving and Loans product, individual loan provider),
24. What are the issues and problems with loans access and repayments? Please specify,

### **Issues, Challenges and Risks**

25. What are the most concerned issues and problems which limit Youth and Women's involvement in potential Vanilla farming activity?
26. What have you or your family specifically done to reduce or resolve those issues and problems potentially?
27. What are the most concerned other institutional (social, economy and market) and environmental issues and risks that will affect your family vanilla farming production and business? (e.g. tropical cyclones, lacks of water, flooding, insects, stealing, etc.) Please specify?
28. Have your family ever experienced Vanilla harvest failures? If the answer "Yes" ask when and for specific reason, why,

### **Business and Marketing**

29. How and where your family and other farmers in your community sell their Vanilla produces?
30. How the Vanilla sales is arranged through Vanilla farming organization which you or your family involved with?
31. What and How the Cost of Vanilla sales is decided?
32. What are the significant problems and issues which you or your family have faced or experienced in marketing your harvested Vanilla beans?
33. What are the efforts which have been made to minimize or resolve the problems and issues affecting Vanilla Market?
34. Do you think that the amount of income earned by Vanilla sales have significantly changed your family and your live easily? If so, in what way?
35. Have the cost of Vanilla sales different among the farmers within your community? If the answer "Yes", please specific the reasons,
36. What are still needed to make the Vanilla business and market more profitable and sustainable in your community?
37. How decision-making for Vanilla sales have been jointly decided with your parents or among involved family members in Vanilla farming activity?
38. Are there other opportunities available which you believe could potentially continue provide your family's economic income while involving in Vanilla farming?

### **Closing**

39. What is your aspiration for a better future for youth and Women in Vanilla farming industry?
40. What are the recommendations to increase Vanilla production and productivity in your village?

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