Rural Development Programme IV
Component 1: Strengthening Public Agricultural Extension Services

Context
More than 70% of the Timorese population live in rural areas, the contribution of the agricultural sector to non-oil GDP remains around 30%. Food shortages, lack of employment for young people and low income from agricultural production are the main problems. The existing agricultural extension service is not capable to support the agricultural sector due to weak technical and managerial capacities and to lack of harmonised structures at both central and district levels.

Objective
Sustainable increases in nutrition and food security for farm households and rural communities through strengthening of agricultural extension services.

Approach
The EU has delegated the implementation of the programme to Camões and GIZ (the Portuguese and the German agencies for international cooperation). A joint management team comprises the National Directorate for Agricultural Community Development, the National Directorate for Agricultural Education, GIZ and Camões. The implementation is taking place in all Districts. The main focus is capacity building of Extension and technical staff, strengthening the Agricultural Extension Management System, assisting in the execution of agricultural campaigns as well as rehabilitation, provision of equipment and curricula improvements of agricultural secondary schools.

Current achievements
The National Agricultural Extension Handbook was handed over countrywide to extension and technical staff as well as NGOs. Two campaigns (maize and coffee) are supported through training, input supply for demonstration plots and campaigning. A field training centre at the Agricultural High School in Nartabora was constructed, the curriculum development is on-going. A one year professional course for graduates of agriculture high schools is held with UNTL and SEFOPE support.

Future prospects
Training and coaching of extension staff will continue nationwide together with six new campaigns. Planning, reporting and monitoring are the first priorities to strengthen Extension Management system.