



SECRETARIA DE ESTADO DA
ARTE E CULTURA

Direção Nacional de
Bibliotecas

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF TIMOR-LESTE COUNTRY REPORT

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Name of Country: Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste

Name of Library: (Future) National Library of Timor-Leste

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1. General Overview of Recent Major Developments

The National Library of Timor-Leste (Biblioteca Nacional de Timor-Leste) is in the process of being established as one of the national priorities in the Cultural Sector.

Following an agreement between Government and an Oil Company exploring the Timor Sea, in 2007, a decision was made that a National Library would be developed as a major cultural investment. The National Library of Timor-Leste will be “sustainable, accessible to all, providing space for learning, leisure and recreation and supporting the creation of a knowledge based society, respecting the past, looking to the future and helping develop the nation’s cultural identity”.

Within the framework of this joint-project, it has been decided that the Company would be responsible for all infrastructure development, including furniture and IT, whereas Government of Timor-Leste is responsible for land acquisition, policy development, acquisition and management of library collections and hiring and training of staff.

In the last seven years, the Government of Timor-Leste secured a location in the centre of Dili with 2.5 hectares, where the National Library will be developed. At the same time, the State Secretariat of Arts and Culture developed some key policy documents, provided training opportunities to the existing staff and signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the National Library of Portugal, which will provide support in terms of building a library collection and training of staff.

More recently, the Working Group and Steering Committee of the National Library project, agreed on a basic concept design for the future infrastructure, which is currently being developed and



finalized. Detail design should be completed within 2015 and after that the project shall enter its construction phase.

2. Relationship to Government

According to the National Library Organic Law, the Secretariat of State of Arts and Culture is the body within Government responsible for the future National Library of Timor-Leste. In the last few years, SSAC has also developed other key documents, including a Collection Development Policy, and Educational and Cultural Policy, a Preliminary Human Resource Plan, and an Acquisition, Collection and Storage Plan. All these are working documents, yet to be officially approved.

3. Key Facts and Figures

A National Directorate of Libraries, under direct supervision of a Directorate-General of Arts and Culture, as part of the State Secretariat of Arts and Culture, currently supervises all developments within the National Library project. This National Directorate is composed of 10 library staff with basic library knowledge, acquired during training in country and overseas.

The main Library Collection currently has little over 2.000 specimens, most of which are in Portuguese. They have been inserted in free-of-charge, on-line database, which has been adapted and translated to one of the official languages (Tetum). The collection is stored in a working container, where some of the staff also works.

Besides having a Technical Committee and a Consultative Committee, the new National Library Organic Law is expected to have four main departments:

- Acquisition, Process and Conservation
- Collections, Access and Promotion
- General Administration
- Information Systems

4. New Developments in Creating and Building Collections

NA

5. New Developments in Managing Collections

NA

6. New Developments in Providing Access to Collections

NA

7. Collaborations with Other National Institutions



Within a library capacity building training provided by a local agency – ETDA, East Timor Development Agency – some of the library staff had the opportunity to do internships in existing libraries in Timor-Leste. At the same time, the National Directorate of Libraries has been collaborating with the Ministry of Education, by providing training to School Library managers across the country.

Within a Memorandum of Understanding signed with the National Library of Portugal, in 2011, 5 library staff will attend a training course in Portugal, between October and November 2015.

Finally, in 2015 it is expected that a visit to the National Library of Argentina takes place, and eventually a Memorandum of Understanding will be signed, seeking support in terms of training of staff and collection development.

