



Modesty-Directed Public Policies to Combat Corruption in Timor Leste: An Exploratory Approach to Challenges, Achievements, and Future Prospects

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47134/ijlj.v2i4.3983>

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Received: 05-04-2025

Accepted: 16-05-2025

Published: 06-06-2025



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Abstract: Tackling corruption in Timor-Leste has been part of the challenge over time for both the government and wider society in many of the emerging nations of the global south such as Timor-Leste. Timor's essential challenge is the government and civil society's moral awareness that is slowly deteriorating and will eventually continue to have an endless stream of further negative impacts, such as on the governance and socio-economic progress in terms of weakening the productivity and integrity of modesty-directed and transparent public institutions, eroding civil society trust in government actions, and limiting access to vital services for the benefit of society. This paper explores and assess the effectiveness of public-directed policies in Timor Leste aimed at combating corruption, focusing on the main strategies implemented by the government, the role of independent institutions, and the involvement of civil society in promoting transparency and accountability. The research utilizes a social science exploratory research analyses method where expert interviews, official document reviews, and secondary data analysis are conducted. The results of this study suggest that a critical holistic approach and institutional oversight involving cross-sectoral institutions would be more beneficial to improve the effectiveness of anti-corruption efforts and ensure purposeful governance. Though, arguments-based literature are exposed on the significant steps taken by the Government in Timor, such as the establishment of the Anti-Corruption Commission with the enforcement of the new legal framework, and modulated policies have not been implemented than expected in recent decades.

Keywords: Corruption, Modesty-Directed Public Policies, Governance, Civil Society, Anti- Corruption

Introduction

Combating corruption has gained high priority throughout the world (ADB/OECD Anti-Corruption Initiative for Asia and the Pacific 2007), not least, includes new democracies, such as Timor-Leste. No country, however democratic, is free from corruption. These social ill touches government officials, politicians, business leaders and journalists alike. It destroys national economies, undermines social stability and erodes public trust (Office of the Co-ordinator for Economic and Environmental Activities/OSCE 2025). Thus, when governance failures are annulled to increase acts of corruption, it requires continuous and sustainable handling to reduce corruption through an exploratory scientific discussion's directions referring to modesty public policy, in addition to several conceptual and contextual frameworks needed to evaluate anti-corruption programs, released from the World Bank and country programs over the off decades have been accomplished (See Anti-Corruption Policies and Programs, A Framework for Evaluations, Knowledge, Tools for Academics and Best Practices for Combating and Synthesis about Corruptions Cases, explored, assessed, evaluated, and analyzed by Huther and Shah 2000; Husmann 2007; OSCE 2025; Global Investigations Review 2025; UNCAC-Civil Society Coalition Asia Pacific 2024; Global Resources for Anti-Corruption Education and Youth Empowerment/GRACE and United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime/UNODC 2025). Global Governance Forum (2020) highlighted the issue of ccorruption that it undermines development and prosperity for civilians worldwide. Critically, corruption is an important aspect of poor governance and often defined as the abuse of public office for private gain; this definition includes various forms of interaction between public sector officials and other agents (World Bank 2007 cited in Fjeldstad and Isaksen 2008, in Working Paper's on Reforms: Challenges, Effects and Limits of World Bank Support).

On a global scale, Anti-Corruption is a major challenge faced by many countries, particularly those in the process of consolidating their democratic institutions and establishing effective governance, likewise Timor-Leste. In Timor-Leste, a country that gained independence in 2002, corruption is a significant obstacle not only to economic growth but also to public trust and the legitimacy of government institutions. While the country has made important strides in building a democratic system, corruption continues to undermine transparency in public institutions, the quality of services provided to the population, and the country's sustainable development, which is encapsulated within the goal of enhancing government effectiveness and transparency in a new nation, likewise Timor. This goal "Enhancing Government Effectiveness and Transparency" is part of the process of the *Fight Against Corruption* which offers an assessment of the challenges governments face in tackling corruption, what instruments tend to work and why, and how incremental progress is being achieved in specific country contexts (World Bank 2025a). Meanwhile, on a regional/continental scale, Asia and Pacific, combating corruption is a significant obstacle to the sustainability and growth of development, economies, and healthy cross-institutional sectoral roles in emerging Asia Pacific countries.

UNDP (2025) emphasized in their highlighted a discussion report on the “Transparency, Accountability, and Anti-Corruption” that “Poor governance and corruption are a major bottleneck for human development in Asia-Pacific. Corruption is a key driver of the growing inequality, persistent poverty and the exclusion of the most vulnerable from the gains of economic growth”. Furthermore, Transparency, accountability and anti-corruption are key to achieve all the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). *SDG 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions includes key elements on ensuring access to justice, building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions, as well as reducing bribery and corruption* (UNDP, 2025). Looking at this harsh reality from several exploratory studies of literature as the basis for the author's discussion, ensuring access to justice, as well as effective, accountable and inclusive involvement of institutions and civilians to fight corruption is a hot topic for scholars in Timor Leste nowadays. The author elaborates an explorative analysis of this study in this new country, within a simple and critical discussion. Since its independence, Timor-Leste has sought to implement public policies aimed at combating corruption, with the goal of fostering transparent, accountable, and effective governance. The creation of the Anti-Corruption Commission (CAC) and the development of laws for public transparency are some of the key initiatives adopted by the government.

However, despite these efforts, corruption remains a deeply rooted structural issue within public administration and society, reflecting not only shortcomings in policies but also institutional fragility, resource limitations, and political resistance. Studying public policies on combating corruption in Timor-Leste is crucial for understanding the institutional and social challenges the country faces, as well as offering practical recommendations that could be implemented to improve the effectiveness of anti-corruption policies (Anti-Corruption Commission of Timor-Leste 2019; Borges 2019; Charron, N., and Lapuente, V. 2013; European Commission: Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs 2023; Farrales 2006; Ferreira 2018; Fjeldstad and Isaksen 2008; Government of Timor-Leste 2011; Government of Timor Leste 2024; Global Investigations Review 2025; Global Governance Forum 2020; GRACE and United UNODC 2025; Hira, Murillo, and Kim 2016; Hoxhaj 2020; Husmann 2007; International Transparency Committee 2020; Corruption perceptions index 2020; Katy and Han 2023). The aim of this study is to analyze the strategies adopted by the government of Timor-Leste to fight corruption, assess the effectiveness of independent oversight institutions such as the Anti-Corruption Commission, and explore the role of civil society in promoting transparency and accountability.

The rationale for conducting this study is based on the growing importance of understanding the factors contributing to the persistence of corruption in a context like Timor-Leste, where governance is still young and under development. A critical analysis of anti-corruption policies is essential for identifying gaps in existing strategies and proposing more effective solutions. Additionally, by considering the impact of civil society participation and public engagement in the fight against corruption, this study seeks to

contribute to strengthening democratic institutions and improving governance conditions in Timor-Leste.

This work also aims to assess the interactions between the government, oversight institutions, and civil society, and how these relationships can be strengthened to address corruption more effectively. Active citizen participation in the governance process, through transparency and accountability mechanisms, is seen as a key tool for the success of any public policy to combat corruption. Therefore, this study not only focuses on institutional anti-corruption policies but also on the importance of civic empowerment and interinstitutional collaboration.

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative and exploratory approach to examine modesty-directed public policies for combating corruption in Timor-Leste, focusing on assessing the effectiveness of governance strategies, anti-corruption institutions, and civil society involvement with the support of primary and secondary data. Exploratory research is a methodological approach that is primarily concerned with discovery and with generating or building theory. In a pure sense, all research is exploratory. In the social sciences exploratory research is wedded to the notion of exploration and the researcher as explorer (Davis 2006), which author had explored a scientific perspective of political enquiries in questions or problems within a pragmatic yet will engage in a broad and thorough form of research (Stebbins 2001 cited in Davis 2006). This research has clear directions and outcomes based on the objectives and problems discussed. These directions and outcomes are presented in the following concerned-study problems and study objectives.

Study Problem

- What are the main limitations of public policies aimed at combating corruption in Timor-Leste that hinder their effectiveness?
- How have independent oversight institutions, such as the Anti-Corruption Commission, contributed to reducing corruption in the country? What challenges do these institutions face in their work?
- What role does civil society play in promoting transparency and combating corruption in Timor-Leste? How can society be more effectively engaged in this process?
- What institutional, financial, and cultural factors contribute to the persistence of corruption in Timor-Leste, despite the measures adopted by the government?
- What can be done to strengthen anti-corruption policies and improve governance in Timor-Leste, ensuring greater transparency and accountability in government actions?

Study Objectives

The main objective of this study is to analyze public policies aimed at combating corruption in Timor-Leste, highlighting the strategies implemented by the government, the role of independent oversight institutions such as the Anti-Corruption Commission, and the involvement of civil society in promoting transparency and accountability. Specifically, the objectives of this work include:

- To evaluate the effectiveness of public policies adopted by the government of Timor-Leste in combating corruption.
- To investigate the impact of oversight institutions, such as the Anti-Corruption Commission, on reducing corruption and promoting transparency.
- To analyze the participation of civil society in strengthening governance and promoting anti-corruption actions.
- To identify the main institutional, financial, and social challenges that hinder the success of anti-corruption policies.
- To propose recommendations for improving the implementation of anti-corruption policies, with a focus on strengthening oversight institutions and empowering civil society.

Study Methodology

This study method was structured around semi-structured interviews, document analysis, and bibliographic research, aiming to gain an in-depth understanding of the factors impacting the implementation of anti-corruption policies and the role of civil society in this process.

a. Type of Research

The research is qualitative in nature, conducted through a case study where information is collected from primary and secondary sources, allowing for a contextual and detailed analysis of the phenomenon under study. The choice of a qualitative approach is justified by the need to explore more deeply the perceptions, experiences, and challenges faced by the key actors involved in the fight against corruption in Timor-Leste.

b. Sample

The sample for the semi-structured interviews consisted of experts and public officials directly involved in the implementation of anti-corruption policies, as well as representatives of civil society organizations such as NGOs and social movements. Participants were selected using a convenience criterion, prioritizing individuals with knowledge and experience in the fields of governance and transparency. The interviewees included:

- Four members of the Anti-Corruption Commission (CAC);
- Three representatives from the central government and regulatory agencies;
- Two experts in public policy and governance;
- Four representatives of NGOs and social movements working on transparency and anti-corruption efforts.

The interviews lasted an average of 45 minutes to 1 hour and were conducted either in person or via video conference, depending on the availability and location of the interviewees. All participants were informed about the study's objectives and gave their consent to participate.

c. Data Collection

Data collection was carried out through three main methods:

1. **Semi-Structured Interviews:** The interviews allowed direct interaction with key actors involved in the implementation of public anti-corruption policies. The semi-structured format provided flexibility to explore the interviewees' experiences and opinions, ensuring that specific issues related to anti-corruption policies were addressed while also allowing open discussions about unforeseen challenges. The interviews were recorded with the participants' permission and transcribed for analysis.
2. **Document Analysis:** The research also included the analysis of official documents such as annual reports from the Anti-Corruption Commission, drafts of anti-corruption laws, public audit reports, and other relevant government documents. Document analysis allowed for identifying the strategies adopted by the government and provided concrete data on the progress and limitations of anti-corruption policies.
3. **Bibliographic Research:** The literature review, already discussed in previous sections, included the study of books, academic articles, and specialized publications on governance, corruption, and public policies. This research helped contextualize the study within the existing academic debate and provided a theoretical basis for data analysis.

d. **Data Analysis**

The data analysis was carried out qualitatively and thematically using content analysis. This method allowed for categorizing and interpreting the responses from interviews, analyzed documents, and reviewed publications to identify key themes and patterns related to the fight against corruption in Timor-Leste. The data analysis process included the following stages:

- **Transcription and Coding:** The recorded interviews were transcribed, and the data was then coded by identifying keywords and recurring phrases in the responses. The responses were organized into thematic categories, such as effectiveness of public policies, institutional fragility, role of civil society, and challenges faced by the government.
- **Comparative Analysis:** After coding, a comparative analysis was conducted between the interviews, official documents, and the literature reviewed. This allowed for identifying convergences and divergences in the perceptions of different participants and comparing empirical data with existing theories on governance and anti-corruption policies.
- **Data Triangulation:** To ensure the validity and reliability of the results, data triangulation was used by comparing the findings from interviews with those obtained through document analysis and bibliographic research. This helped to provide a broader and deeper understanding of the issue and possible solutions.

e. **Limitations of the Study**

Although the research aimed to be comprehensive and provide a detailed view of the fight against corruption in Timor-Leste, some limitations should be acknowledged:

- Restricted Sample: The sample of interviewees was limited to a small number of key actors, which may restrict the generalization of the results to the entire population, or all parties involved in the anti-corruption process.
- Access to Sensitive Documents: Some internal government documents and audit reports may not have been accessible due to confidentiality issues or lack of transparency in government publications.
- External Factors: The research was conducted during a period of political stability in Timor-Leste, but potential political changes or instability could impact the effectiveness of public anti-corruption policies.

f. Ethical Aspects

This study followed all necessary ethical guidelines to ensure confidentiality and respect for the participants. All interviewees signed an informed consent form, in which they were clarified about the nature of the research, its objectives, and how the data would be used. The recordings of the interviews were kept confidential, and participants' names were anonymized to preserve privacy.

Result and Discussion

The modest pace of implementation of effective public policies to combat corruption in Timor-Leste has included a critical and holistic evaluation. As such, the extent to which and how Timor's government institutions, civil society, and the application of legal mechanisms act in the prevention and fight against corruption are described in the efforts in sustainable manner. These efforts need to be phased and paced in a sustainable and integrated public policy, explored with additional learning through assessments of international literature review examples from developed countries in the global north and other new, and developing countries in Asia and the Pacific other than Timor Leste, namely Vietnam, Papua New Guinea, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Palestine, and Nepal (UNODC Regional Office for Southeast Asia and the Pacific 2021). In detail, the author provides initiative steps and key challenges in implementing anti-corruption policies in the country for a gradual prosperous, corruption-free country, as presented in the following Figure 1. Voicing on the Modesty-Directed Public's Policy Challenge and Solution in Timor Leste detailing four official representatives' functions of Timor Leste discussing on this issue (See also Table 1: page 9).



Figure 1. Voicing on the Modesty-Directed Public Policy's Challenge and Solution in Timor-Leste

Based on Figure 1. above, the exploration of discussion that the author presents provides a new horizon for understanding this study.

Public Policies for Combating Corruption in Timor-Leste

Timor-Leste, a country with a recent history of independence and reconstruction, faces significant challenges in terms of institutional development and governance strengthening. Since its independence in 2002, the Timorese government has worked on creating legal and institutional frameworks to combat corruption. Key public policies in place include the establishment of the Anti-Corruption Commission (CAC), the promulgation of transparency laws, and the implementation of public audit mechanisms.

Establishment of the Anti-Corruption Commission (CAC)

The Anti-Corruption Commission (CAC) was established in 2010 with the goal of investigating and combating corruption cases within the public administration. The CAC is one of the main anti-corruption agencies in Timor-Leste, and its responsibilities include investigating corruption allegations, promoting public awareness campaigns, and collaborating with other international institutions in the exchange of information. However, studies and interviews conducted for this research indicate that the autonomy of the CAC and its investigative capacity are still limited due to a lack of financial resources and political interference.

In terms of effectiveness, many interviewees highlighted that the CAC has made progress in cases of corruption in smaller sectors of the public administration, but its operations remain limited in high-profile cases or those involving senior political figures. The lack of political support from key government sectors has also hindered the full performance of the CAC.

Transparency Laws and Public Audits

The Timorese government has sought to adopt a legal framework to promote transparency in government activities, with the Public Access to Information Law, enacted in 2011, being an important example. This law aims to ensure that citizens have access to relevant information regarding government actions and decisions. Although the legislation is positive, the practical implementation of this law faces significant obstacles, such as the lack of training within public institutions to ensure the effective availability and dissemination of data (King and Rafay 2023; Krisztina and Günther 2013; Kube 2015; Ramos 2020; Santos 2020; Soares 2024; Szarek-Mason 2010; Tarling 2005; TATOLI News 2024; Trading Economics Timor Leste 2025; Transíncia 2025; Transparency International-The global Coalition Against Corruption 2024; UNCAC-Civil Society Coalition Asia Pacific 2024; UNDP Asia and the Pacific 2025; United Nations 2025; UNODC Regional Office for Southeast Asia and the Pacific 2021; United State of Department of State 2025; World Bank 2025 (a); World Bank 2025 (b)).

Another important aspect is the public audit system, which is meant to allow monitoring of public finances and government spending. Despite efforts, effective control

and oversight are still limited, largely due to institutional fragility and the absence of a robust regulatory framework that allows truly independent and transparent oversight.

Challenges in Combating Corruption in Timor-Leste

Despite progress in anti-corruption policies, Timor-Leste still faces significant challenges (King and Rafay 2023; Krisztina and Günther 2013; Kube 2015; Ramos 2020; Santos 2020; Soares 2024). These challenges are multifaceted and involve structural, cultural, and political issues that must be addressed for the country's anti-corruption policies to become more effective.

Fragility of Government Institutions

One of the main barriers to combating corruption is the fragility of government institutions. Timor-Leste's political system is still young, and in many cases, the oversight institutions lack the autonomy necessary to act independently. The lack of training and financial resources hampers the effectiveness of bodies like the Anti-Corruption Commission (CAC) and other oversight mechanisms. Additionally, there is a lack of continuity in public policies, which are often changed with the turnover of government, undermining the stability and effectiveness of anti-corruption actions (King and Rafay 2023; Krisztina and Günther 2013; Kube 2015; Ramos 2020; Santos 2020; Soares 2024; Szarek-Mason 2010; Tarling 2005).

Political Interference

Another significant challenge is political interference in the work of anti-corruption institutions. Many interviewees pointed out that political influences have been an obstacle to the autonomy of the Anti-Corruption Commission and other control mechanisms, as also emphasized by Soares (2024). Corruption is often intertwined with power structures, making it difficult for institutions to investigate and prosecute corruption cases involving influential political figures. Table 1: Modest-Directed Outlook on Public Policy discussing on this intertwined discussion in Timor Leste is presented.

Table 1. Modest-Directed Public Policy in Timor-Leste

Experts and Public Officials in Timor-Leste	Position and Function	Modesty-Directed Public Policy's Challenges	Present and <u>Long Term</u> Solutions
4	Anti-Corruption Commission	Less Significant	Increasing actions on Public Awareness
3	Central Government and Regulatory Agencies	Adversity on Auditing	Developing Transparency Regulatory Framework
2	Public Policy and Governance	Less Effectiveness	Maintaining Controlling
4	Transparency and Anti-Corruption Efforts	Lack of Resources for the Modulated Policy's Support	Saving the Budget for actions

The ideas and discussions based on the summary of the author's data analysis presented in Table 1 above illustrate some of the assessments of the discussion results, among others, regarding three pillars are concerned on the transparency, involvement of civil society, and international community cooperation and support, as explored, assessed based on secondary data analyses e.g., literature (Transíncia 2025; Transparency International-The global Coalition Against Corruption 2024; UNCAC-Civil Society Coalition Asia Pacific 2024; UNDP Asia and the Pacific 2025; United Nations 2025; UNODC Regional Office for Southeast Asia and the Pacific 2021), and as presented in the following brief-discussion.

Culture of Impunity and Lack of Accountability

The culture of impunity is one of the most challenging aspects of fighting corruption in Timor-Leste. Although there are laws and institutions created to address corruption, white-collar criminals are often not held adequately accountable (UNODC Regional Office for Southeast Asia and the Pacific 2021). The lack of a culture of accountability and the perception that powerful individuals can escape justice contribute to the ongoing cycle of corruption.

Role of Civil Society

Civil society has played an increasingly important role in the fight against corruption in Timor-Leste. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs), social movements, and the media have been instrumental in promoting transparency, educating the public about corruption, and exposing corrupt practices. However, the lack of resources and the institutional fragility of these organizations still limits their ability to effectively influence public policies and ensure greater accountability (Transparency International-The global Coalition Against Corruption 2024; UNCAC-Civil Society Coalition Asia Pacific 2024).

Role of the International Community in Combating Corruption

The international community has also played a crucial role in supporting Timor-Leste in the fight against corruption. Organizations like the United Nations and the European Union have provided technical assistance and financial support to strengthen Timor-Leste's institutional capacities, particularly in terms of improving governance and developing anti-corruption capacities. International cooperation has been essential in developing training programs for civil servants and members of civil society. However, some scholars point out that external aid is not always effective in the long run. This is because international programs are often not sufficiently contextualized to meet Timor-Leste's specific needs, or they may be discontinued due to changes in political or budgetary priorities (Transíncia 2025; Transparency International-The global Coalition Against Corruption 2024; UNCAC-Civil Society Coalition Asia Pacific 2024; UNDP Asia and the Pacific 2025).

Conclusion

Corruption continues to be one of the main obstacles to sustainable development and good governance in Timor-Leste. Despite the government's efforts to implement public policies to combat corruption, this study reveals that structural, political, and cultural challenges still limit the effectiveness of these policies to be implemented in the country, as the modulated policies are not established yet. However, there are signs of progress for a modesty-directed public policies that were processed through the series of campaigns for governmental transparency, especially in strengthening anti-corruption institutions, reducing political interference and lack of stability of prepared-budgets for implementing the anti-corruption actions within institutions or agencies, and promoting how crucial and important these issues are for the nation in the present and future. The author highlights the most important ideas of this paper as presented.

- Effectiveness of Public Anti-Corruption Policies

The creation of the Anti-Corruption Commission (CAC) was a positive step, but its effectiveness remains limited. The main difficulties include the lack of institutional autonomy, insufficient financial resources, and political interference. Although the CAC has carried out some important investigations, as mentioned in the interviews, the lack of political support and the lack of trust in the institutions still affect its ability to act effectively, especially in cases involving high-ranking figures in the government.

- Fragility of Institutions and the Judiciary System

The government institutions of Timor-Leste, still in the process of strengthening, face difficulties in exercising efficient and independent control over corruption practices. The lack of training, qualified human resources, and a solid infrastructure are persistent problems. Furthermore, the judiciary system continues to be vulnerable to political influence, which hinders the rigorous enforcement of the law against those involved in corruption schemes.

- Cultural and Political Challenges

The culture of impunity and the normalization of corruption are deeply rooted factors in Timor-Leste, reflecting an environment where corruption is often seen as an acceptable or inevitable practice. Additionally, political interference in anti-corruption decisions, coupled with the lack of political will from leaders to enforce laws fairly, has hindered the implementation of anti-corruption policies. Political resistance and the lack of committed leadership to public integrity are issues that need to be addressed for more effective anti-corruption efforts.

- Role of Civil Society

Civil society has played an increasingly important role in the fight against corruption in Timor-Leste. Non-governmental organizations, social movements, and citizens have contributed with monitoring actions and denunciations of corrupt practices. However, civil society also faces challenges related to the lack of resources and the limited influence it has over public policies. Support from the government and the international community is essential to strengthen civil society's work and promote public accountability.

- Implications for the Future of Anti-Corruption Policies

This study highlights the urgent need for structural reforms in Timor-Leste's governance system to create a more favorable environment for transparency, public accountability, and institutional strengthening. Among the main implications, the following are emphasized:

- Strengthening the Autonomy of Anti-Corruption Institutions

For anti-corruption institutions to carry out their functions independently, it is crucial to have legal guarantees that ensure their political and financial autonomy. The Anti-Corruption Commission (CAC) needs an adequate budget and greater investigative capacity to tackle complex cases, especially those involving figures of power within the government.

- Reinforcing Training and Capacity Building of Institutions

A significant investment in training public servants and members of the judiciary system is essential to ensure the effectiveness of anti-corruption policies. Additionally, permanent governance training programs should be created so that public servants are better prepared to handle issues of transparency and anti-corruption.

- Promoting Civil Society Participation

Strengthening the role of civil society is crucial to ensure greater transparency and public accountability. Civil society organizations should be integrated into governmental monitoring structures and take an active role in the creation and evaluation of anti-corruption policies. Furthermore, it is essential that the government and civil society collaborate more closely to ensure that policies and actions are more inclusive and effective.

- Cultural and Political Change

For anti-corruption policies to be truly effective, a significant effort is needed to change the political and social culture in Timor-Leste. Strengthening a culture of integrity and accountability should be a priority for both the government and society. Educational programs aimed at promoting ethics and democratic values are essential to transform public perception of corruption.

Of these concise conclusions, this study put forwards a moral expression on corruption dilemma each decade in emerging nations for our prosperous global civilization and development that "Power tends to corrupt; absolute power corrupts absolutely." – British historian Lord Acton, 1887 (cited in OSCE 2025 p.1). But power needs purposeful and modulated governance. Thus, the author summarizes the signs of progress in strengthening the modulated transparency and accountability of government anti-corruption institutions in Timor Leste with a modest-review of public policy direction recommendations, with lessons learned from other countries facing similar issues, as contained in the Implementation of a National Anti-Corruption Policy from multi-sectoral efforts, thereof:

- The National Anti-Corruption Policy. The government of Timor-Leste should establish a clear and long-term national anti-corruption policy, involving all levels

of government, private institutions, and civil society. This policy should be accompanied by a monitoring and evaluation strategy to ensure its effectiveness and adapt it to evolving challenges.

- Support for the Capacity Building of Oversight Institutions. Strengthening the independence and technical capacity of oversight institutions, such as the Anti-Corruption Commission (CAC) and the Court of Auditors, is essential to ensure that the governance system is transparent and accountable. This will enhance their ability to investigate, prosecute, and deter corrupt practices.
- Engagement and Empowerment of Civil Society

Civil society organizations should be included in the decision-making process regarding public policies and in monitoring government actions. Increasing funding and operational capacities for these organizations will allow them to play a more effective role in combating corruption, promoting transparency, and ensuring public accountability.

- Promotion of Civic Education

Educational programs focusing on ethics, transparency, and public accountability should be promoted to foster a cultural transformation in the country. Civic education can help dismantle the social acceptance of corruption and encourage a culture of integrity among future generations.

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