



IV GOVERNO CONSTITUCIONAL MINISTÉRIO DA SAÚDE

THE CABINET OF HEALTH RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Preamble

Over the last ten years, health-related research has been carried out by both national and international agencies. These have not been coordinated, monitored or archived properly by a single institution or office in the Ministry of Health of Timor-Leste.

Research may not have clearly contributed to the development of health systems. Also, there is currently no technical and ethical commission in this country to review and approve the technical merits and ethical aspects of health research proposals.

Opportunities may have been missed to use good quality research results to contribute to policy decisions, including improving planning and management in the health sector. The most recent Ministry of Health Organic Law and Ministerial Diploma has yet to clearly define the status and standing of research initiatives. Timor-Leste's Health Policy Framework states:

“In the medium to long term, the MoH will establish a National Research Center (NRC). The NRC will be charged with the responsibility of promoting and supporting essential health research initiatives and developing a national health research agenda in East Timor. It will issue clearance for research, co-ordinate research activities, conduct research training and disseminate research findings.”

In order to establish a successful research Institute that is responsive to the health development needs of the country, it is important and necessary to establish a framework that will guide its development and implementation.

In line with the above-mentioned policy direction the Government, through the Ministry of Health, enacts the following to have the force of law:

Chapter I General Provisions

Article 1 Object

This present diploma provides a framework and norms of functioning of the Cabinet of Health Research and Development.

Article 2 Nature

The Cabinet of Health Research and Development is the Cabinet or Entity, under the supervision of the Minister of Health, to promote and coordinate the health-related research needs and initiatives endowed with juridical personality.

Article 3 Vision

Striving for better health through health research

Article 4 Mission

Evidence based health policy and programs informed by health research and development

Article 5 Tutelage

1. The Cabinet of Health Research and Development, under the supervision of the Ministry of Health, will be responsible to perform research, as well as to regulate and co-ordinate the health-related research activities for the country.
2. The Cabinet shall provide an overall framework of health research initiatives and priorities.
3. The Ministry of Health will retain supervise and control of the Institute's administrative and financial aspects.

Article 6 Responsibilities

The Cabinet of Health Research and Development will have roles and responsibilities to:

1. Establish the research priorities and strategic directions for health research in Timor-Leste;
2. Develop and advocate for the application of best practices and evidence based health research in Timor-Leste;
3. Examine the research initiatives proposed by individuals, institutions or agencies, in line with health development needs;
4. Provide a technical and ethical clearance for health research initiatives;
5. Provide research training based on internationally recognized ethical guidelines, and promote its accountability and transparency;
6. Ensure evidence-based policy and planning;
7. Promote quality health research and publications;
8. Advocate and mobilize resources for research and development in Timor-Leste;
9. Act as a 'clearing house' for all health-related research in Timor-Leste

Article 7 Regime

The Cabinet of Health Research and Development is governed by this Diploma and by the legal

provisions directly applicable thereto.

Chapter II

The Structure and Organizations of the Cabinet of Health Research and Development

Article 8

The Structure

The Structure of the Cabinet of Health Research and Development includes:

1. Governing Board
2. Technical and Ethical Committee
3. Office of the Cabinet of Health Research and Development

Section I

The Governing Board

Article 9

The composition and structure of the Governing Board

1. The Governing Board may consist of:
 - a. The Minister of Health
 - b. The representatives of Academics
 - c. Health NGO representatives
 - d. Health Professional Organization (Association):
 - 1) MD Association
 - 2) Public Health Association
 - 3) Nurse Association
 - 4) Midwives Association
 - 5) Other Health Professionals
2. The structure of the Governing Board shall incorporate:
 - a. The Minister for Health, as Chairperson
 - b. The Vice-Chairperson, who will be elected by members of the Board
 - c. The Secretary
 - d. Other members
3. The Governing Board members should be elected through a Ministerial Diploma, for two years, with renewable terms of office.
4. The terms for the Governing Board are that members must hold their position until a new appointment takes place with a Ministerial Diploma.
5. In the event of a vacancy occurring in the membership of the Governing Board, the origin Institution can appoint a new person to fill the vacancy until a new appointment take place with a Ministerial Diploma.
6. The membership of the Governing Board can be any one who lives in Timor-Leste, has a relevant academic qualification, and is not necessarily a Ministry of Health Civil Servant.

Article 10

The Duties and Functions of the Governing Board

1. The Governing Board call meetings to:
 - a. Approve work plans and budgets, whether annual or multiannual;

- b. Approve progress and financial reports;
 - c. Approve the internal regulation of the Cabinet of Health Research and Development
 - d. Approve any technical guidelines for research;
 - e. Approve the agreements of co-operation between the Institute of Health Research and Development with other in-country or international research institutions;
 - f. Decide on the areas of research priorities.
2. It shall provide advice to staff of the Institute as called upon

Article 11 Decision Making

1. The subjects presented in the agenda of the meeting of the Governing Board shall be decided by a majority of the members present at the meeting
2. Each Governing Board member present at the meeting (including the person presiding at the meeting) is entitled one vote but, in the event of a tie, the Chairperson shall take a final decision.

Article 12 Meetings and Quorum

1. The Governing Board shall meet quarterly, at such place and time as the board may determine
2. Additional meetings of the board may be convened by a chairperson or at the request of the board members
3. Oral or written notice of the meeting of the board should be given by the secretary to each member of the board at least one week before the time appointed for the holding of the meeting
4. Notice of the meeting shall specify the general nature of the business to be discussed at the meeting, no business other than that shall be discussed, except business which the Governing board members present at the meeting unanimously agree to treat as 'other' business.
5. Any 50% of the members of the Governing Board, plus either the chairperson, vice-chairperson or secretary constitute a quorum of the meeting of the board.
6. If within half an hour of the time appointed for the meeting a quorum is not present, the chairperson can decide to proceed with the meeting.
7. The chairperson shall preside at every meeting. In the chairperson's absence another Governing Board member as unanimously agreed by those board members present shall act as Chairperson.

Section II The Technical and Ethical Committee

Article 13 The Nature

The Technical and Ethical Committee is the collective body that supports the Cabinet of Health Research and Development to ensure the technical and ethical aspects of any research initiatives in health fields are considered.

Article 14 The Composition of the Technical and Ethical Committee

1. The Technical and Ethical Committee is composed of the following members:
 - a. Scientist with educational background of Basic Science;
 - b. Scientist with educational background of Public Health;
 - c. Scientist with educational background of Medical Science;
 - d. Scientist with educational background of Social Science;
 - e. Priest or other religious representative;
 - f. Lawyer;
 - g. Lay person (female);
 - h. Lay person (male).
2. In order to assume its job effectively, the Technical and Ethical Committee will consist of the following structure:
 - a. The Chairperson, who is selected from the members of the Committee
 - b. The Vice Chairperson, elected from one of the members
 - c. The Secretariat, elected from one of the members
 - d. Other members
3. The Technical and Ethical Committee will be elected through a Ministerial dispatch, for two years, with a renewable term of office.
4. The terms for the Technical and Ethical Committee are that members must hold their positions until a new appointment take place
5. In the event of a vacancy occurring in the membership of the Technical and Ethical Committee, the origin Institution can appoint a new candidate to fill the vacancy until a new appointment take place

Article 15 Meetings and Quorum

1. The Technical and Ethical Committee shall meet quarterly, at such place and time as the Committee may determine
2. Additional meetings of the Committee may be convened by a chairperson or at the request of the committee members
3. Any 50% of the members of the Technical and Ethical Committee, plus either the chairperson, vice-chairperson or secretary constitute a quorum of the meeting of the board. This must include at least three Scientists.
4. If within half an hour of the time appointed for the meeting a quorum is not present, the chairperson can decide to proceed with the meeting.
5. The chairperson shall preside at every meeting. In the chairperson's absence another Technical and Ethical Committee member as unanimously agreed by those committee members present shall act as Chairperson.

Article 16 Competencies

1. Developing a minimum standard of technical and ethical clearance in line with universal and nationally accepted principles and values,
2. Approval of short, medium and long term research priority areas
3. Examining and providing input for all research initiatives based on technical merits and

ethical aspects

4. Approval of research proposals which reach minimum technical and ethical standards
5. Approval of progress and final report of research result
6. Advising on technical issues of policy papers and articles of research to be published

Article 17 Decision Making

1. Proposals from researchers can be received by the Secretary at any time, but before the quarterly deadlines (the first week of February, May, August, or November of each year)
2. Proposals should be distributed by the Secretary to the Committee members at least two weeks prior to the date of the meeting
3. Meetings will be conducted on the first week of March, June, September, and December of each year, and mainly for reviewing technical and ethical aspects of proposals
4. Depending on the complexity of the research proposal, the Technical and Ethical Committee may request a researcher to make a presentation to the Committee
5. Official feedback will given in writing within one week of the meeting
6. The decision results can be:
 - a. Fully accepted, with technical and ethical clearance passed
 - b. Provisionally accepted, pending changes, additions or clarifications
 - c. Not accepted
7. The proposals which require changes or clarifications must be resubmitted, and the procedure begins again from point 2 of this article.
8. Technical and Ethical clearance will not be passed if the recommended changes or additional clarifications are not addressed.

Section III Head of the Cabinet

Article 18 The Nature

The Cabinet is lead by the Head of the Cabinet, and will be appointed by the Minister of Health, with consideration of the Governing Board decision and competencies in managing a national level institution.

Article 19 Competencies

The Head of the Cabinet is responsible for exercising all competencies that have not been assigned by law or regulation to another organ, and specifically:

- a. Implement the organic structure and the rules of procedure of the Cabinet of Health Research and Development;
- b. Execute work plans and budgets, whether annual or multi-annual;
- c. Report progress and financial statements;
- d. Implement the research priority areas for short, middle, and long term periods
- e. Coordinate incoming research initiatives, and selection of research projects to be funded;
- f. Develop and broaden collaborative network among research and academic institutions, non-government and government organizations and professional organizations both within Timor-Leste and internationally;

- g. Advocate for evidence based health policy and programs, informed by research findings.

Section IV The Secretariat

Article 20 Competencies

1. The Secretariat is the support function for the Cabinet of Health Research and Development, in the areas related with administrative processes, and financial and others resources needs support processes, with the following competencies:
 - a. A high-quality administrative process that ensures the efficacy and efficiency of the Cabinet of Health Research and Development in delivering its roles and functions
 - b. Responsible for the formulation of the annual, biannual or multi annual plan and budget
 - c. Meeting arrangements for the Governing body and Technical and Ethical Committee
 - d. Ensuring the effective functioning of the office
 - e. Responsible for managing all assets of the Institute
 - f. Responsible for all reports mandated to the Cabinet of Health Research and Development
 - g. Inform researchers of the outcome of their proposal submissions;
 - h. Inform researchers of the approval of progress and final report of research results;
 - i. Inform researchers of the approval of policy papers and articles of research results for publication;
 - j. Others duties directed by the Head of the Institute allowed by the law.
2. The secretariat will be managed by the head of the secretariat with a number of staff members.

Section V Department of Health System & Policy Research and Development

Article 21 Competencies

1. The Department of Health System and Policy Research and Development supports the function of the Cabinet of Health Research and Development in research areas related to health system and health policy development, with the following competencies:
 - a) Mapping and prioritizing the needs of research related to health system and policy
 - b) Encouraging researchers, scientists, health staff, and health students to more productive in writing research proposals in the area of Health System and Policy;
 - c) Extensive review of incoming research project proposals;
 - d) Selection of research project proposals, and proposal to the Technical and Ethical Committee for recommendation of ethical clearance and budget;
 - e) Extensive review of the final reports of research results, policy papers and research result articles which will be published;
 - f) Proposing selected final reports of research results, policy papers and research result articles to the Technical and Ethical Committee for recommendation and to get approval from the Head of the Cabinet for publication.
 - g) Engaging policy makers to use health system and health policy research results
2. The department of health system and health policy research will be managed by a head of department, and can be structured into different units depending on areas of competencies.

Section VI Department of Biomedical & Pharmaceutical Research and Development

Article 22 Competencies

1. The department of Biomedical & Pharmaceutical Research supports the Cabinet of Health Research and Development in areas related to Biomedical & Pharmaceutical Research, with the following competencies:
 - a) Mapping and prioritizing the needs of research related to Biomedicine and Pharmacy
 - b) Encouraging researchers, scientists, health staff, and health students to more productive in writing research proposals in the area of Biomedicine and Pharmacy ;
 - c) Extensive review of incoming research project proposals;
 - d) Selection of research project proposals, and proposal to the Technical and Ethical Committee for recommendation of ethical clearance and budget;
 - e) Extensive review of the final reports of research results, policy papers and research result articles which will be published;
 - f) Proposing selected final reports of research results, policy papers and research result articles to the Technical and Ethical Committee for recommendation and to get approval from the Head of the Cabinet for publication.
 - g) Engaging policy makers to use Biomedical and Pharmaceutical research results

2. The Department of Biomedical and Pharmaceutical Research will be managed by a head of department, and can be structured in different units depending on the areas of competencies.

Section VII Researcher groups

Article 23 Structure

- a) A researcher group consists of 3 or more researchers who are focused on specific areas of expertise, such as Health Policy, Health Care, Health Economics, Communicable Diseases, Entomology, Sanitation, etc.
- b) Researchers will be accredited and two levels will be applied, i.e. Senior Researcher and Junior Researcher.
- c) Accreditation is based on the level of formal education, informal education, publications, and involvement in scientific activities.

Article 24 Competencies

Researchers responsible for all activities of research, i.e.:

- a) Writing appropriate research proposals
- b) Data collection
- c) Data management
- d) Data analysis
- e) Writing reports of research results, policy papers, and articles based on research results and references for publication.

**CHAPTER III
Final Provisions**

**Article 25
Regulatory Arrangement**

The Ministry of Health will revise the Diploma, pertinent with the Ministry of Health Organic Law, to accommodate that the Cabinet of Health Research and Development is set within the structure of the Ministry of Health.

**Article 26
Amendment**

Articles within this diploma can be amended in future as deemed appropriate by agreement from the Minister of Health

Approved on 17th November 2009

By

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