



TIMOR-LESTE

Timor-Leste, located in Southeast Asia, is one of the youngest nations in the world. Its territory covers the eastern part of the island of Timor, the enclave of Oe-Cusse Ambeno and the islands of Ataúro and Jaco. The vast maritime area of Timor-Leste is around seven times that of its land surface.

Located to the northwest of Australia and at the eastern Zero Plastic Policy most point of Indonesia, the largest archipelago State in the world, Timor-Leste is at the centre of the Coral Triangle – considered to be the region with the greatest marine biodiversity on the planet, which needs to be preserved as a matter of priority.

MARITIME BOUNDARIES

The establishment of our final maritime boundaries is a national cause that grants us the right to full sovereignty and our rights under international law and the law of the sea. Establishing our maritime boundaries is the starting point for developing our Blue Economy and for having effective control and management over our sea and the natural resources it holds.

BLUE ECONOMY

As an island nation, the maritime areas of Timor-Leste hold enormous resource potential.

It is vital to gain further knowledge of our maritime resources, so as to feed the country's sustainable development and the Blue Economy. Maritime resources protect the ocean's environmental and ecologic balance, while sustaining our social and economic growth.

The Blue Economy of Timor-Leste is presently at an embryonic stage. Timor-Leste is yet to explore the full potential of its marine resources.

- The warm waters of Timor-Leste host some of the best preserved coral reefs in the world

- Conservation International has concluded that these waters, particularly around Ataúro Island, host the greatest concentration of biodiversity in the world. There are around 643 species of fish in Timor-Leste. Research conducted in the waters of Ataúro found an average of 252 species of coral fish at every location
- Our seas hold one of the greatest concentrations of cetaceans on the planet
- Ataúro Island is a migration corridor for blue whales
- Over 30 species of cetaceans live in the waters of Timor-Leste, including the melon-headed whale and the spinner dolphin, as well as migratory species such as the humpback whale and the blue whale
- The marine and coastal beauty of Timor-Leste holds enormous potential in terms of tourism development

Strategic Development Plan 2011-2030 / Government Programme / Sustainable Development Goal 14 / Blue Economy

In December 2019 the Government of Timor-Leste appointed H.E. Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão – former President of the Republic, former Prime Minister and current Chief Negotiator for the Delimitation of Maritime Boundaries – as Government's Special Representative for the Blue Economy, supported by the Maritime Boundary Office, with the purpose of coordinating national and international advocacy around the Blue Economy of Timor-Leste, as well as to lead the efforts on promoting and developing the Blue Economy.

This includes, among other things, campaigns on environmental education and on combating environmental degradation, as well as the development of strategies, programmes, action plans and partnerships.

What we have done

- Implemented the *Zero Plastic Policy* throughout the country
- Created protected marine areas around our country
- Drafted plans for establishing a marine national park around Ataúro island, in order to protect tropical reefs holding the greatest biodiversity in the world

Tara Bandu – Traditional custom

From time immemorial the Timorese have acknowledged the importance and potential of the sea and the value it holds for their lives, both as source of food and as source of income.

The need to protect the sea has been long imbedded in Timorese culture. *Tara Bandu* is an animist spiritual belief that is used by local communities, through traditional laws and customs, for managing and protecting their natural resources.

Our challenges

- The oceanographic health of Timor-Leste is ranked 172nd out of a total of 221 countries and territories (according to the National Report on the Status of the Seas and Coasts of Timor-Leste)
- Illegal fishing
- Degradation of marine ecosystems and of our corals
- Climate changes
- Maritime security

Timor-Leste is committed to establishing partnerships and to working in cooperation so as to have access to the best practices for strengthening the bases for the sustainable development of the Blue Economy.

“My sea, my Timor”

TIMOR-LESTE

Area: 15,410 km²
Population: 1.3M

My Sea,
My Timor

Learn more @ www.gfm.tl or contact:
Maritime Boundary Office

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