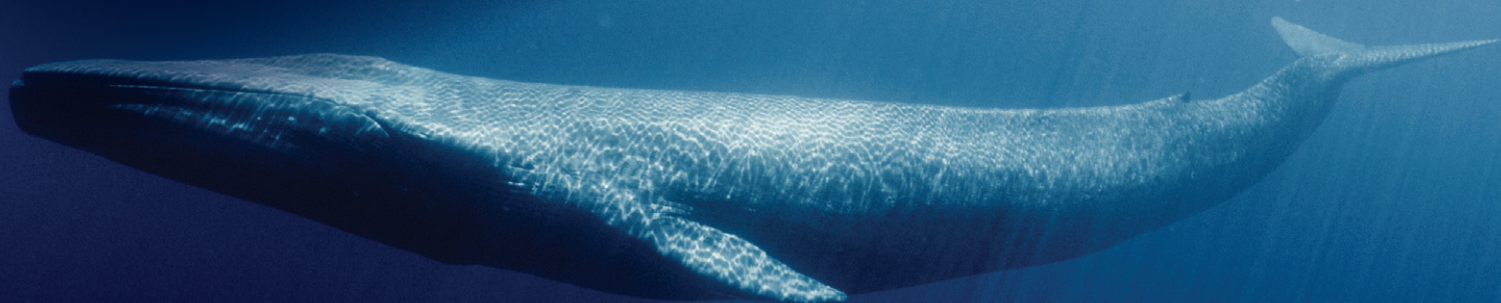


# The blue economy will be the foundation of Timor-Leste's sustainable development

## *My Sea, My Timor*



**Timor-Leste is committed to safeguarding its pristine marine ecosystems and strengthening communities based on a nature positive economy to ensure a better future for all.**

**T**imor-Leste, a small island nation in Southeast Asia, is located at the heart of the Coral Triangle and is home to exceptional marine biodiversity. The marine ecosystems of Timor-Leste are internationally recognised for their ecological importance and host a diverse range of marine species including:

### 1. **Cetaceans:**

30 of the world's 90 species of cetaceans can be found in Timor-Leste's waters. These include melon-headed whales, pilot whales, spinner dolphins, orcas and sperm whales as well as migratory species including pygmy blue whales.

### 2. **Coral reefs and reef fish species:**

More than 1,200 species of reef fish and 400 reef-building coral species are found in Timorese waters, including a coral reefs area of 350km<sup>2</sup> around Nino Konis Santana National Park and 98km<sup>2</sup> around Atauro Island.

### 3. **Rare species and new discoveries continue to be made.**

Rare and new species continue to be discovered in Timorese waters, highlighting the significant potential of this largely untapped marine resource for advancing ocean science and understanding the global marine ecosystem.

Since restoring its independence on 20 May 2002, Timor-Leste has made great progress in moving from fragility to resilience to establish a peaceful, free and democratic country with an open and growing economy. National development efforts are ongoing including of a sustainable

national economy. The path forward is guided by the *Strategic Development Plan 2011-2030* and will be achieved with the development of a blue economy that provides a nature positive economic foundation for the nation.

The Timorese people have a long-standing and deep-rooted relationship with the ocean, as illustrated by the country's origin story as the "*grandchildren of the crocodile*." Timorese communities have demonstrated resilience in safeguarding the ocean and its resources despite various challenges posed by human development and climate change.

The government of Timor-Leste is committed to building a sustainable ocean economy to underpin the nation's future. To achieve this objective, the development of a blue economy is being led by the Prime Minister, supported by the Land and Maritime Boundary Office, with a range of nature positive economic initiatives, programs and policies.







The Government of Timor-Leste is committed to sustainably utilising and maximising its ocean-based economic sectors, including through:

1. **Preparing a Blue Economy Policy and Action Plan** to provide a comprehensive strategy to guide the sustainable development of Timor-Leste's marine resources.
2. **Ocean conservation:** alignment with the Kunming-Montreal Global Framework, 30% of Timor-Leste's marine areas will be designated for conservation by 2030. This will include the restoration and expansion of mangroves to serve as natural barriers against climate change and as nurseries for marine life, the conservation of coral reefs and the protection of waters critical to Timor-Leste's rich marine biodiversity.
3. **The establishment of a National Marine Park around Ataúro** to protect its valuable marine biodiversity and tropical reefs to support nature positive economic development to provide jobs and opportunities to local communities.
4. **The establishment of a Marine Education Centre on Ataúro Island** to tell the story of Timor-Leste's remarkable marine environment, support the sustainable development of our blue economy and affirm Timor-Leste's sovereign rights and jurisdiction over its seas.
5. **Aquaculture and Sustainable Fishing:** While small-scale and traditional fishing practices remain prevalent, Timor-Leste is developing sustainable fishing practices in accordance with international standards, particularly the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries. The expansion of aquaculture will provide support for food security and sustainable economic growth.
6. **Marine eco-tourism:** Timor-Leste will continue to build its marine tourism sector which will become a primary driver of the diversification of Timor-Leste's economy.
7. **Salt Production:** Timor-Leste currently produces salt at a small scale, predominantly for local consumption. This industry will be expanded with improved production techniques and the exploration of export markets.
8. **Seaweed Cultivation and Production:** The seaweed farming industry is a promising new sector with the potential to significantly contribute to local livelihoods. This sector has strong growth potential, particularly in international markets where demand for seaweed products is increasing.
9. **Expansion of marine protected areas within Nino Konis Santana National Park**, in order to protect critical habitats.
10. **Restoration and expansion of mangrove forests**, which play a vital role in coastal protection, carbon sequestration, and biodiversity.
11. **Develop marine spatial planning** to manage different ocean uses effectively, including fisheries, marine pollution control, marine protected areas, marine tourism, and marine scientific research.

#### TIMOR-LESTE SNAPSHOT

- Population of 1.3 million people
- Area: 15,410 km<sup>2</sup>
- Situated at the centre of the Coral Triangle and the Wallacean Hotspot
- Serves as a significant migratory route, breeding ground, and nursery area for a diverse range of marine megafauna, including large whales, pelagic sharks, sea turtles, and the rare pygmy blue whale.