

PUBLIC CONSULTATION REPORT

Policy and Action Plan for the Promotion of a Resilient and Sustainable Ocean Economy in Timor-Leste [2025–2035]

September-October 2025



Land and Maritime Boundary Office
Government of the Democratic
Republic of Timor-Leste



Acknowledgements by the Land and Maritime Boundary Office

The Land and Maritime Boundary Office (LMBO) hereby expresses its gratitude to all those who contributed to the success of the Public Consultation on the Policy and Action Plan for the Blue Economy [2025–2035]. This process represented a decisive step towards building a blue, sustainable and prosperous future for Timor-Leste.

Online contributions

To all those who participated in the online phase, held between 11 and 30 September 2025, the LMBO extends its sincere appreciation. The contributions of civil society, development partners, the private sector, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and academia added technical depth and practical proposals that will enrich the final version of the Policy and Action Plan.

In-Person Participants

Particular note is taken of the participation of approximately 700 representatives from across the national territory, including Village Chiefs, Administrative Post Administrators and Presidents of the Municipal Authorities (PAM), as well as senior members of the Government, at the session held on 21 October at the Ministry of Finance. The high level of engagement and the quality of the interventions during the question-and-answer sessions confirmed the Blue Economy as a national priority, shaped through inclusive dialogue with and for citizens.

Special institutional recognition is due to the Ministry of State Administration and to ministerial focal points for their decisive role in national mobilisation and coordination. Particular mention is also made of the 187 written submissions received, which will be instrumental in transforming local concerns into concrete solutions.

Prime Minister

Special appreciation is extended to His Excellency the Prime Minister, Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão, for the visionary leadership demonstrated in presiding over the in-person session of 21 October 2025. His opening and closing remarks reinforced the vision of the Blue Economy as a strategic driver of growth and development for the country.

This process demonstrated that when Government and society work together, it is possible to transform potential into real opportunities. With your contribution, Timor-Leste is better prepared to realise the vision of a **Blue, Resilient and Prosperous Timor-Leste**.

Land and Maritime Boundary Office

Dili, Timor-Leste, 12 December 2025

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INTRODUCTION



On 25 June 2025, the Council of Ministers of Timor-Leste approved, in principle, the Policy and Action Plan for the Promotion of a Resilient and Sustainable Ocean Economy [2025–2035]. This decision demonstrates the commitment of the Ninth Constitutional Government to promoting an innovative and integrated model of economic development that ensures the sustainable use of marine resources, improves the living conditions of coastal communities and safeguards marine ecosystems.

To ensure that this policy reflects the needs and aspirations of all sectors of society, a broad public consultation process was undertaken. This process involved the participation of civil society, development partners, the private sector, non-governmental organisations, academia and, subsequently, municipal authorities and local communities, thereby strengthening territorial and social representation in the drafting and refinement of the document.

In a democracy, public consultation is an essential instrument that enables citizens to express their views to the Government on specific matters or decisions, allowing for their active participation in the shaping of public policies and in the governance of the country itself.

The public consultation on Timor-Leste's Blue Economy Policy and Action Plan was conducted in a combined format: online and in person.

The online component took place between 11 and 30 September 2025, enabling broad public participation and the submission of contributions on this strategic policy.



On 21 October 2025, an in-person session was held at the Ministry of Finance in Dili, attended by approximately 700 participants, including municipal authorities and community leaders. Among those present were Presidents of the Municipal Authorities, Administrative Post Administrators, Village Chiefs and representatives of relevant ministries. During this session, the priorities and objectives of the policy were presented, followed by dialogue sessions and the collection of contributions to ensure the effective inclusion of stakeholders.

The public consultation was therefore a crucial moment in ensuring transparency, inclusion and social representativeness in the development of an ocean governance model capable of responding to environmental challenges while promoting equitable development.

This combined public consultation approach (online and in person) reflects the Government's commitment to ensuring a participatory, transparent and inclusive process in the formulation and implementation of the Blue Economy, creating space for different voices to be heard and incorporated into the construction of a sustainable future for Timor-Leste.



Timeline of the Policy and Action Plan for the Promotion of a Resilient and Sustainable Ocean Economy in Timor-Leste [2025–2035]

2023 – Concept Note for the Blue Economy Policy

Early 2024 to June 2025 – Development of the Policy and Action Plan for the Promotion of a Resilient and Sustainable Ocean Economy in Timor-Leste [2025–2035] by the technical team.

14 May 2025 – Presentation of Part I of the Policy and Action Plan for the Promotion of a Resilient and Sustainable Ocean Economy in Timor-Leste [2025–2035], covering the concept, mission and vision, to the Council of Ministers.

25 June 2025 – Approval in principle of the Policy and Action Plan for the Promotion of a Resilient and Sustainable Ocean Economy in Timor-Leste [2025–2035] by the Council of Ministers.

11–30 September 2025 – First phase of the online public consultation to gather contributions from civil society, the private sector, development partners, academia and other interested stakeholders.

21 October 2025 – In-person public consultation in Dili, with the participation of municipal authorities and community leaders.

October–December 2025 – Analysis of contributions received and revision of the Policy and Action Plan for the Promotion of a Resilient and Sustainable Ocean Economy in Timor-Leste [2025–2035].

January 2026 – Final approval of the Policy and Action Plan for the Promotion of a Resilient and Sustainable Ocean Economy in Timor-Leste [2025–2035] by the Council of Ministers.

February 2026 – Printing and publication of the Policy and Action Plan for the Promotion of a Resilient and Sustainable Ocean Economy in Timor-Leste [2025–2035].

Late February – Late July 2026 – Socialisation and awareness-raising phase of the Policy and Action Plan for the Promotion of a Resilient and Sustainable Ocean Economy in Timor-Leste [2025–2035], across all municipalities of the country, engaging local communities and led by His Excellency Prime Minister Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão.

From the first quarter to the end of 2026 – Commencement of the implementation of the measures and actions set out in the Policy and Action Plan for the Promotion of a Resilient and Sustainable Ocean Economy in Timor-Leste [2025–2035].

2

METHODS AND PARTICIPATION

The public consultation process was conducted in two complementary phases: *online* and in person, ensuring broad accessibility and the inclusion of relevant contributions, including technical corrections and suggestions.

- **Online Phase (11–30 September 2025):** Conducted through the official portal (<https://www.gftm.gov.tl/pt/consulta-publica-ea/>), this phase enabled the submission of written contributions from various sectors, providing strategic inputs, corrections and key recommendations for the refinement of the policy.
- **In-Person Phase (21 October 2025):** Held at the Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão Auditorium, Ministry of Finance, in Dili, with approximately 700 participants, including members of the Government, Presidents of the Municipal Authorities (PAM), Administrative Post Administrators and, notably, Village Chiefs from across the national territory. Chaired by His Excellency the Prime Minister, the session included technical presentations on the Policy, question-and-answer sessions and the collection of written contributions.
- **Target Audience:** Civil society, the private sector, development partners, local communities, local authorities, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the general public.
- **Dissemination Channels:** Government website, social media, national press, institutional contacts and billboards. Documentation relating to this public consultation procedure was made available on the portal: <https://www.gftm.gov.tl/pt/consulta-publica-ea/>.

3

ONLINE PUBLIC CONSULTATION

The online public consultation, conducted between 11 and 30 September 2025 through the official website of the Land and Maritime Boundary Office (<https://www.gftm.gov.tl/pt/consulta-publica-ea>), represented a pioneering innovation in Timor-Leste. A total of 20 submissions were received from strategic stakeholders, including civil society, development partners, academia and the private sector. These contributions provided relevant technical recommendations and key inputs for the refinement of the policy framework.

Key highlights:

- **NGOs:** Coral Triangle Centre, Conservation International Timor-Leste, WorldFish, Blue Ventures, HACOSTA (Center for Coastal and Marine Resources Studies), La'o Hamutuk Institute, Leonel Training Centre (LTC), Tahi Opu Foundation
- **Academia:** University of Sydney, LELI (Lorosa'e English Language Institute)
- **Private Sector:** Caltech Group, DFBC Dili Financial Business Centre, Timor-Leste Australia Business Council
- **Development Partners:** World Bank Group, UNCT- United Nation Country team
- **Civil Society**



The banner features the logo of the Gabinete das Fronteiras Terrestres e Marítimas on the left and the Economia Azul logo on the right. The main text is in white and light blue on a dark blue background. A QR code is positioned on the right side, with a hand icon pointing to it. Below the QR code, there is a call to action in Portuguese and English. At the bottom, contact information is provided in white text.

Gabinete das Fronteiras Terrestres e Marítimas

Economia Azul
O Meu Mar, O Meu Timor

Consulta Pública Online

Online Public Consultation

11 – 30 September 2025

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Blue Economy: Policy and Action Plan to Promote a Resilient and Sustainable Economy of the Sea in Timor-Leste, 2025 – 2035

Email: consultapublica@gftm.gov.tl
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Challenges of the Online Consultation

The first phase of the public consultation was conducted through an online platform, with the objective of gathering contributions from government institutions, development partners and citizens. The process aimed to ensure transparency, inclusion and broad participation in defining strategic priorities.

The conduct of this public consultation through an online platform represented a historic milestone and a pioneering exercise in Timor-Leste. This initiative reflects the Government's commitment to modernising governance mechanisms and expanding civic participation, enabling broader and more accessible public engagement in the policy-making process. However, despite its innovative nature, this initial phase of the participatory process encountered significant constraints that affected its overall effectiveness and reach.

The main challenges identified include:

- **Delays in translation and language barriers:** The late availability of the Tetum version significantly limited the immediate participation of communities dependent on that language, weakening essential inclusion and perpetuating linguistic inequalities.
- **Inconsistencies in sectoral data:** Divergences between information provided by ministries and development partners revealed critical gaps in data harmonisation and validation, undermining the reliability of the process.
- **Insufficient territorial coverage:** The limited reach of the online consultation exposed deep digital inequalities, marginalising remote and vulnerable communities lacking internet access.
- **Excessive document complexity:** The dense technical language and the extensive volume of content hindered understanding among citizens and organisations without specialised expertise, thereby reducing participatory impact and ownership of the document.

4 IN-PERSON SESSION



PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON THE BLUE ECONOMY POLICY AND ACTION PLAN WITH MUNICIPAL AUTHORITIES AND COMMUNITY LEADERS

21 October 2025, Ministry of Finance

This public consultation constituted a fundamental exercise in democratic participation, essential to ensuring that the national development strategy for the Blue Economy is broadly validated and enriched by local perspectives.

Prime Minister Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão delivered the opening address before a full auditorium of approximately 700 participants, including Village Chiefs and Administrative Post Administrators, underscoring the political vision and the potential of the Blue Economy Policy and Action Plan to contribute to national development in an integrated and inclusive manner.

This was followed by detailed technical presentations highlighting the priorities and opportunities of the Blue Economy to drive national development, support biodiversity and marine conservation, and ensure long-term environmental sustainability.

Following the presentations, Community Leaders took part in question-and-answer sessions and submitted written contributions to ensure that their views and the priorities of the communities they represent are reflected in the final version of the policy.

The Government of Timor-Leste recognises the essential role of community leadership in shaping the future of the country's marine resources and encourages broad participation in this public consultation process.

The next phase of consultations on the Policy and Action Plan for the Promotion of a Resilient and Sustainable Ocean Economy in Timor-Leste [2025–2035] will take place throughout 2026, under the leadership of Prime Minister Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão, covering all municipalities across the country.

Address by His Excellency Prime Minister Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão

The Prime Minister began his remarks by explaining that the Blue Economy begins in the mountains and ends in the sea, reinforcing that sustainable development requires an integrated vision between terrestrial and marine ecosystems. He recalled his visit, in the previous year, to Selo Kraik, in the municipality of Aileu, where he conveyed to the population that preserving springs and forests is essential to ensuring the health of rivers and, consequently, of the ocean.





He highlighted that, despite progress, the country continues to face serious challenges related to pollution and poor waste management, particularly during the rainy season, when rubbish is carried into the sea, causing severe environmental impacts. He also warned of the global challenges posed by climate change, emphasising that Timor-Leste, as an island situated within the Coral Triangle – which extends from the Philippines to Timor-Leste – bears a significant responsibility in safeguarding its marine biodiversity, currently threatened by tourism pressures and unsustainable human practices.

The Prime Minister recalled the period of UNTAET in 2000 and expressed his satisfaction at seeing the Timorese people finally free and confident about the future. He stressed, however, that this freedom must now be translated into concrete action to protect natural resources and ensure the well-being of future generations. “The true wealth of Timor-Leste lies in the sea,” he stated, reinforcing the importance of conserving and valuing marine biodiversity as the foundation of the people’s livelihoods.

He announced that in November 2025, Timor-Leste will receive an international scientific research vessel, which has travelled worldwide on oceanographic missions and will conduct studies in the Timor Sea. This visit will contribute to strengthening scientific knowledge and supporting policies for the sustainable management of marine resources.

The Prime Minister addressed the Presidents of the Municipal Authorities, urging them to protect and enhance the natural spaces under their responsibility, highlighting community-based tourism as an alternative model for local development. He argued that the country should avoid the construction of large hotels and instead promote community-based tourism, which generates direct benefits for local populations while preserving natural and cultural heritage.

He further stressed that environmental protection should not be viewed as the exclusive responsibility of coastal areas. “Even those who live far from the sea must understand that the ocean is part of our lives, as it provides the oxygen and balance of our planet,” he affirmed. He underscored the need to educate young people, students and children on the importance of cleanliness and environmental preservation, noting that Village Chiefs and local Administrative Post Administrators

play an essential role in this mission.

The Prime Minister also emphasised that community-based tourism represents a genuine opportunity to generate income and promote sustainable development within communities. He referred to the example of the Great Barrier Reef in Australia as a warning about the negative effects of uncontrolled tourism, which has caused serious damage to marine life.

He called on all stakeholders to prepare for a new tourism paradigm in Timor-Leste, distinct from the mass tourism model of neighbouring destinations such as Bali. He encouraged the development of an authentic tourism offering, whereby each municipality contributes a diversified, integrated gastronomic proposal that reflects its cultural heritage.

He underlined the central role of the Blue Economy in fostering knowledge, appreciation and the sustainable use of the sea’s resources. He highlighted the fundamental role of Village Chiefs in disseminating and implementing sound environmental and tourism practices within communities, reaffirming that the sea is the country’s greatest asset and must be managed prudently and responsibly for the benefit of present and future generations.

The Government’s primary strategy centres on community-based tourism, prioritising the direct involvement of local communities, avoiding large-scale hotel developments and promoting inclusive economic, social and environmental benefits. This approach enhances the authenticity of the tourism experience, preserves natural and cultural heritage and ensures the long-term sustainability of Timor-Leste’s Blue Economy.



IN - PERSON SESSION

He concluded by stating that the Blue Economy is a vital instrument for developing Timor-Leste in a sustainable and innovative manner, balancing environmental conservation with economic progress. He emphasised that the country's wealth is not measured solely by State revenues, but by improved living conditions for communities through the enhancement of local resources.



Presentation of the Blue Economy Policy and Action Plan – Strategic Framework: Axes, Pillars and Strategic Objectives

During the public consultation on the Blue Economy Policy and Action Plan [2025–2030], held with municipal authorities and community leaders, the Executive Director of the Land and Maritime Boundary Office, Elizabeth Exposto, presented the policy approved in principle by the Council of Ministers on 25 June 2025.



The policy is structured in three parts: an introduction and general framework; a strategic framework, with the vision “Timor is TASI!”, the objective of sustainable maritime development and the mission of resilient protection of marine resources; and a detailed action plan in table format setting out pillars, objectives, actions, responsible entities and timelines.

It is organised around four axes:

- Research, education and communication (Know the Sea);
- Marine preservation and conservation (Respect the Sea);
- Sustainable use of the sea (Live with the Sea);
- Cross-cutting implementation measures (basic sanitation, wetland management, rural development, Ocean Satellite Account and planning/financing).

The Executive Director called for the support of local authorities and communities in implementing the policy, through partnerships with the Government, development partners, NGOs and the private sector. She further underlined that Timor-Leste's marine resources form the basis for inclusive development and global conservation.

The presentation on the Blue Economy Policy and Action Plan – Strategic Framework: Axes, Pillars and Strategic Objectives continued with the Legal Unit Director, Adelsia Silva, and Communications Officer, Elvis Guterres.



In the afternoon, the session proceeded with a detailed presentation of the Strategic Framework of the Blue Economy Policy and Action Plan.

The Coordinator of the Blue Economy Unit, Inês Araújo-Gonçalves, focused her presentation on Axis 3: Sustainable Use – Living with the Sea.



Question-and-Answer Session

Time was allocated for local authorities and Village Chiefs to express their views or raise questions related to the topic under discussion or other matters relevant to their communities. This practice forms part of the consultation and community participation process, enabling local leaders to represent the needs and concerns of their communities, thereby ensuring greater engagement and legitimacy in the decisions taken.



Summary of Interventions during the Question-and-Answer Session

During the sessions held in the morning and afternoon, participants welcomed the Blue Economy Policy (BEP) and expressed their willingness to support its implementation. The interventions highlighted key aspects for strengthening sustainable development in coastal and mountainous areas, as well as ensuring the responsible management of natural resources.

In the morning session, participants emphasised the need to promote concrete actions in mountainous regions, recognising that the Blue Economy begins in the mountains and ends in the sea. Concerns were raised regarding weak enforcement of environmental laws, particularly outside the capital, and a call was made

for strengthened awareness-raising and enforcement activities at local level. The importance of ensuring the continuity of the BEP and implementing effective environmental protection measures was also underlined, including the economic valorisation and control of single-use plastics.



In the afternoon session, interventions focused on the need to prohibit predatory fishing practices — such as the use of chemicals and explosives — and to strengthen environmental education for fishers. Participants also stressed the importance of enhancing technical capacities in municipalities through training initiatives and international exchanges. They further recommended community involvement in coastal clean-up campaigns, the promotion of sustainable tourism based on local traditions, and the enhancement of marine ecosystems, with particular emphasis on mangrove planting.



Other important points raised included strengthening maritime enforcement to combat illegal fishing, improving infrastructure — particularly rural roads — and acquiring patrol vessels. The establishment of recycling centres and the provision of economic incentives for local leaders were also suggested. Proposals were further presented regarding the reactivation of agricultural projects.

IN - PERSON SESSION

In summary, the interventions reflected participants' concern for promoting environmental sustainability, empowering local communities and ensuring greater integration and support from public institutions, so as to guarantee the effective implementation and continuity of the objectives of the Blue Economy Policy.

Post-it notes were distributed to participants in the Public Consultation on the Blue Economy Policy and Action Plan to enable them to formally record comments, suggestions and concerns regarding the strategic axes of the policy.

Forms were also distributed during the Public Consultation on the Blue Economy Policy and Action Plan of Timor-Leste, held on 21 October 2025, with the aim of collecting comments, messages and suggestions from participants. This initiative formed part of the Government's effort to ensure a participatory, transparent and inclusive process, involving municipal authorities and community leaders.

The following is the list of comments by Municipal Authority.

	Municipality	Comments by Village Chiefs
	Aileu	20
	Ainaro	12
	Ataúro	2
	Baucau	34
	Bobonaro	18
	Covalima	8
	Dili	8
	Ermera	39
	Lauém	5
	Liquiça	6
	Manatuto	7
	Manufahi	12
	Viqueque	8
	RAEOA	8
Total		187





Following the public consultation on the Blue Economy Policy and Action Plan, several considerations and contributions were recorded that merit attention in the subsequent phase of finalising and implementing the strategic document.

In summary, participants emphasised the importance of:

- Integrating all contributions received, including forms and comments submitted during the in-person and online sessions, into the final public consultation report. This consolidated document should be shared with the relevant ministries, municipal authorities and development partners, promoting transparency and institutional coordination.
- Sharing the consolidated document with the relevant ministries, municipal authorities and development partners, ensuring transparency and institutional alignment.
- Continuing and intensifying awareness-raising and education activities on the Blue Economy in municipalities, in order to strengthen community knowledge of sustainable practices and the role of marine conservation in national development.
- Engaging in dialogue with His Excellency the Minister of State Administration and His Excellency the Minister of Finance, with a view to assessing the establishment of a support mechanism or financial incentive for Village Chiefs, recognising their fundamental role at community level.

- Comparative Study and Community Engagement: The Village Chiefs unanimously requested the conduct of a comparative study and their involvement in activities related to the Blue Economy, in order to strengthen and expand their knowledge and capacities.
- Strengthening interministerial coordination among government entities operating in the Blue Economy domain, ensuring integrated and effective implementation of the Action Plan.

Recognition was also given to the essential role of local authorities and Village Chiefs in community mobilisation and in implementing sectoral policies.

The public consultation process reaffirmed the Government's commitment to ensuring a participatory, inclusive and evidence-based approach, reinforcing its dedication to the sustainable development of marine and coastal resources for the benefit of present and future generations.

These recommendations reflect the collective and diverse contributions of participants and will be duly considered in the consolidation and future implementation of Timor-Leste's Blue Economy Policy and Action Plan.



Closing Address

The closing session was presided over by His Excellency the Prime Minister, who expressed his appreciation for the valuable interventions and contributions presented during the session, recognising the commitment and active participation of all municipal authorities and community leaders.

On the occasion, the Prime Minister proposed that a **National Sea Day** be established on **5 June**, coinciding with World Environment Day, as a means of valuing the ocean and promoting a culture of respect for and protection of marine resources. The proposal was unanimously welcomed by all those present.

In his remarks, he called for continued collaboration between the Central Government, Municipal Authorities and Local Communities, underlining that the successful implementation of the Blue Economy Policy will depend on joint commitment and cohesion across all levels of governance. He emphasised that the Blue Economy should be understood as an opportunity for inclusive and sustainable growth, capable of strengthening the national economy while preserving the ecosystems that sustain the life and well-being of the Timorese people.

In closing, the Prime Minister conveyed a symbolic message of unity and solidarity, stating that “if I had arms long enough, I would extend them to embrace everyone present, leaving no one behind,” as an expression of his commitment to a Blue, Sustainable and Innovative Timor-Leste.



5 CONCLUSION

The public consultation on the Policy and Action Plan for the Promotion of a Resilient and Sustainable Ocean Economy in Timor-Leste [2025–2035], conducted in both online and in-person formats, represented an important exercise in democratic and inclusive participation.

For the first time in Timor-Leste, a structured and open national consultation process was implemented in relation to a strategic policy for the marine sector, enabling the collection of diverse contributions from community leaders, municipal authorities, the private sector, civil society, academia, NGOs, interested citizens and development partners.

The views expressed during the consultation demonstrated broad consensus on the importance of education in fostering sustainable practices, the recognition of local communities as key actors in driving transformation, and the need for close institutional coordination to ensure successful implementation of the policy.

The process thus strengthens the foundations for collaborative governance in the field of the Blue Economy. Contributions from participants, particularly development partners, addressed essential gaps in the initial version, capturing relevant perspectives from across society and enabling citizens to participate actively and inclusively in shaping this policy.

The public consultation marks a significant milestone, culminating in final approval by the Council of Ministers in January 2026 and the commencement of implementation of measures and actions from the first quarter of 2026, following the socialisation phase led by His Excellency Prime Minister Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão.

Accordingly, this initiative guides future actions to consolidate Timor-Leste as an example of responsible and sustainable management of its vast marine resources — ensuring a lasting legacy for present and future generations.



6

ANNEXES

Documents made available during the Public Consultation (online and in-person session of 21 October 2025):

- Agenda of the Public Consultation on the Blue Economy Policy and Action Plan with Municipal Authorities and Community Leaders
- Participation Forms (Formuláriu Ba Partisipasaun Konsulta Públika)
- Executive Summary: Policy and Action Plan for the Promotion of a Resilient and Sustainable Ocean Economy in Timor-Leste [2025–2035]

AGENDA OF THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON THE BLUE ECONOMY POLICY AND ACTION PLAN WITH MUNICIPAL AUTHORITIES AND COMMUNITY LEADERS

21 October 2025

TIME	ACTIVITIES
8:00 AM – 9:00 AM	Registration
9:00 AM – 9:05 AM	Video 1: Marine Biodiversity and the Potential of the Blue Economy in Timor-Leste
9:05 AM – 10:00 AM	Opening by the Prime Minister
10:00 AM – 10:05 AM	Video 2: Blue Economy: Policy and Action Plan for the Promotion of a Resilient and Sustainable Ocean Economy in Timor-Leste [2025–2035]
10:05 AM – 10:30 AM	Presentation on the Blue Economy Policy and Action Plan – Strategic Framework: Axes, Pillars and Strategic Objectives
10:30 AM – 11:00 AM	Coffee Break
11:00 AM – 12:00 PM	(Cont.) Presentation on the Blue Economy Policy and Action Plan – Strategic Framework: Axes, Pillars and Strategic Objectives
12:00 PM – 12:30 PM	Questions and Answers
12:30 PM – 2:00 PM	Lunch Break
2:00 PM – 3:30 PM	(Cont.) Presentation on the Blue Economy Policy and Action Plan – Strategic Framework: Axes, Pillars and Strategic Objectives
3:30 PM – 4:00 PM	Questions and Answers
4:00 PM – 5:10 PM	Written contributions from municipal authorities and community leaders
5:10 PM – 5:30 PM	Closing remarks



Blue Economy

My Sea, My Timor

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
**BLUE ECONOMY: POLICY
AND ACTION PLAN FOR THE
PROMOTION OF A RESILIENT
AND SUSTAINABLE OCEAN
ECONOMY IN
TIMOR-LESTE**

2025-2035

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BLUE ECONOMY: POLICY AND ACTION PLAN FOR THE PROMOTION OF A RESILIENT AND SUSTAINABLE OCEAN ECONOMY IN TIMOR-LESTE [2025-2035]

Introduction

The “*Policy and Action Plan for the Promotion of a Resilient and Sustainable Ocean Economy in Timor-Leste*” seeks to establish the political vision and action strategy of the Ninth Constitutional Government for this sector over the next ten years (2025–2035).

Within the framework of promoting a resilient and sustainable ocean economy, whose fundamental pillar is an ecosystem-based approach¹, the primary objective is the valorisation of the ocean and its marine (i.e. ocean-based) resources, through balanced planning of their use and the development of economic activities, taking into account the capacity of marine ecosystems to sustain such activities and to recover from them.

In ocean policy, the adopted perspective primarily aims at a shift in Timor-Leste’s economic development paradigm, through the adoption of an integrated approach capable of balancing the sustainable use of marine resources, the improvement of living conditions for the population as a whole, and the protection of marine ecosystems, while simultaneously promoting, in an inclusive manner, job creation, poverty eradication, and the mitigation of the impacts of climate change.

In its ocean policy, the Government considers three key factors: **social**, relating to poverty reduction, income generation, and the improvement of living conditions; **economic**, including consumption, production, commercialisation, services, and investment; and **environmental**, relating to the protection of ecosystems and natural resources.

Timor-Leste as a maritime State

Timor-Leste is a semi-island State, surrounded by clear waters rich in biodiversity. It is located within the Coral Triangle, a region that encompasses the areas with the highest concentration of marine species² on the planet.

¹ An approach that considers the complex interactions between living organisms and non-living elements, such water, and climate, within an ecosystem.

² <http://ctatlas.coraltriangleinitiative.org/About>

The Coral Triangle includes 30% of the world's coral reefs. This region is home to approximately 76% of all known coral species, as well as an exceptionally high diversity of reef fish, with around 2,500 species, representing approximately 37% of all reef fish species. The Coral Triangle covers an area of approximately 6,000,000 km², extending from land to sea, and spans the territories of Indonesia, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, the Solomon Islands, and Timor-Leste. It is also home to six of the world's seven marine turtle species, as well as blue whales, sperm whales, and dugongs.

Timor-Leste, endowed with rich coral reefs and mangrove forests, possesses a significant national maritime space with abundant marine resources that its people have valued since ancient times. The deep-rooted relationship between the Timorese people and the ocean has embedded environmental sustainability within Timor-Leste's culture, as reflected in the continued practice of traditional ceremonies such as *Tara Bandu*, which promote environmental conservation and future sustainability.

Through the Blue Economy Policy – a resilient and sustainable ocean economy – it will be possible to promote the sustainable use of the ocean, seas, and coastal zones for economic growth, improved social conditions, and environmental preservation.

Guiding principles for a Policy Framework and Action Plan for Timor-Leste's Blue Economy

In defining a Policy Framework and Action Plan that is effective for Timor-Leste's Blue Economy – the full document is available at <https://www.gftm.gov.tl/tdt/konsulta-publika-ea/> – the Government has taken into consideration the following guiding principles and objectives:

— **Good Ocean Governance:** the establishment of an appropriate political and administrative framework for the development of the blue economy, including the review and creation of the necessary and appropriate legal framework, as well as associated policies, to ensure coordinated, integrated, intersectoral, and multidisciplinary management. Good ocean governance also includes the essential land–sea interaction, requiring effective intersectoral coordination and political and technical articulation between terrestrial and maritime spatial planning.

— **Protection, preservation, and conservation of the marine environment:** the assessment of existing measures related to the protection, preservation, and conservation of marine ecosystems, evaluating their adequacy and effectiveness, as well as the development of new measures to ensure the sustainability and resilience of marine ecosystems. Such assessments and biodiversity studies must be supported by a solid scientific evidence base.

— **Intergenerational responsibility:** the marine environment concerns all generations and constitutes an important legacy to be protected for the benefit of future generations. Therefore, to ensure secure and long-term investment in the future of the national blue economy, it is essential to foster a “blue generation” and promote knowledge of the importance of the ocean and marine resources, ensuring the active participation of communities and the general public. It is also important to recognise the ocean as a strategic asset and its relevance to the sustainable economic development of all Timorese people.

— **Sustainable development:** the success of the blue economy depends on the planning, monitoring, and evaluation of policies, programmes, and projects that promote balanced economic development, recognising that “use” must not be equated with “depletion” of resources, and taking into account principles such as environmental, social, and economic sustainability.

— **Support for innovation:** the blue economy is associated with technological innovation and the creation of new business opportunities, encouraging research and the development of new technologies and practices. In Timor-Leste, a young and fragile State, investment in technological innovation represents a significant challenge, not only due to limited financial resources, but also because of constraints in human resource capacity and specialised knowledge in areas related to blue economy development.

— **National cooperation, from central to local levels:** the implementation of the blue economy in Timor-Leste requires the effective participation of all components of society, from central to local government, involving public and private entities and civil society, including women’s organisations, associations of persons with disabilities, the media, and local authorities. These strategic partners are crucial for identifying threats and challenges, as well as opportunities offered by the blue economy. The full exercise of the rights to information and public participation is therefore a fundamental element of this process. The privileged knowledge of local communities is essential for defining and implementing policies appropriate to blue economy development, and their active participation, in collaboration with Government and public and private partners, both national and international, is an indispensable condition for this political and strategic vision.

— **International and regional cooperation:** the promotion of international and regional cooperation initiatives to advance the blue economy in Timor-Leste, as a means of overcoming global and regional threats and challenges, given that marine resources do not recognise borders and their protection and conservation require global and regional approaches. Additionally, the sharing of knowledge and experience, as well as the identification of best practices and technical capacities from friendly and cooperating countries, is particularly crucial in the early stages of blue economy development. Timor-Leste will ensure its participation in various international forums and make use of

cooperation platforms of which it is a member, with the dual objective of developing strategic partnerships and actively participating in the global framework of ocean and sea governance.

The Government considers a broad range of economic activity sectors, from traditional activities such as fisheries, to the maritime sector with its logistics and infrastructure components, including maritime transport and shipbuilding and repair, as well as more innovation-driven activities such as offshore oil and gas extraction, the development of offshore renewable energy, and marine biotechnology, as outlined in the framework below.



Concept of the Blue Economy for Timor-Leste

The concept of the blue economy has developed significantly in recent years across the world. This is because it is now scientifically acknowledged that a healthy ocean can provide solutions to many of the challenges facing the contemporary world.

In Timor-Leste, the sea has long shaped the country's past and constitutes a fundamental pillar of its vision for the future. For the people of Timor-Leste, the sea is an integral part of their way of life and holds deep spiritual significance. According to legend, the Timorese people are descendants of the crocodile — *“upon its death, its body transformed into the land of Timor, its spine and scales became the mountains and hills, and the ocean became its eternal home.”*

Many Timorese depend on the sea for their livelihood and subsistence, particularly through fishing and the harvesting of marine species. The country's rich coral reefs, which host one of the highest levels of biodiversity in the world, together with the steep and extensive underwater cliffs surrounding Timor-Leste, represent a major attraction for tourism.

Warm waters and pristine tropical beaches, the annual migration of blue whales, dolphins, and dugongs, together with a distinctive regional culture and a welcoming population, create ideal conditions for the development of community-based tourism. This contributes to job creation and poverty reduction, while not diminishing the richness and diversity of marine resources.

Fishing is a fundamental activity for the Timorese economy. However, due to Timor-Leste's limited capacity to effectively monitor its national maritime space, illegal fishing activities carried out by foreign commercial fleets have been allowed to persist, resulting in significant economic and environmental losses. As such, there is an urgent need to identify solutions to address this situation and to ensure the sustainability of fish species that are currently being exploited in an uncontrolled and illegal manner.

On the other hand, there is considerable development potential yet to be harnessed, ranging from aquaculture to maritime transport and infrastructure, port facilities and activities, as well as marine renewable energy. This potential must be supported by an ocean sustainability plan that regulates maritime areas under Timor-Leste's jurisdiction, ensuring that long-term economic and social development does not come at the expense of marine ecosystem protection.

Linked to the objective of economic, social, and environmental sustainability is the additional goal of achieving full sovereignty over the country's maritime territory, which depends on the delimitation of maritime boundaries with neighbouring States. In this context, Timor-Leste has recently completed the delimitation of its maritime boundaries with Australia.

Timor-Leste successfully concluded the delimitation of its maritime boundaries with Australia through a historic process of compulsory conciliation based on the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), to which Timor-Leste is a State Party. The outcome of this compulsory conciliation process was the signing of the *"Treaty between the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste and Australia establishing their respective maritime boundaries in the Timor Sea"*, signed in March 2018 and ratified in August 2019.

Timor-Leste is continuing its efforts to delimit maritime boundaries with Indonesia, with a view to increasing its potential for resource exploration, particularly within the Exclusive Economic Zone, including rights relating to the exploration of resources in the water column, such as fisheries.

Accordingly, the concept of the blue economy applicable to Timor-Leste is one that links the economic potential of marine resources with the need for sustainable national development, while ensuring the protection and conservation of nature and environmental resilience. Thus, the **concept** of the blue economy for Timor-Leste is defined as follows:

A set of integrated policies and actions that, with a focus on the ocean, support the country's economic and social development, based on sound environmental practices, in a diversified, sustainable, and inclusive manner, ensuring the long-term balance of marine ecosystems and resources.

Strategic Framework for the Blue Economy in Timor-Leste

It is important to recall that the blue economy encompasses all aquatic spaces, including the ocean, seas, coasts, lakes, rivers, and groundwater. As such, it covers not only the country's coastal areas, but also inland territories, notably the mountainous regions of the country.

It is well established that most ocean-related problems originate on land, notably through marine litter (including plastics), pollution from industrial and domestic effluents and agricultural run-off, and the expansion of coastal urban areas. These factors add further pressure on the ocean, which is already affected by challenges such as overfishing, illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, ocean warming, acidification, eutrophication, and deoxygenation, resulting in the loss of marine biodiversity and the degradation of marine and coastal ecosystems.

Based on the Blue Economy concept adopted for Timor-Leste, the Government has defined a vision, an objective, and a mission.

Accordingly, the Government of Timor-Leste shares the following **vision**:

Investing in the growth of coastal, marine, and maritime sectors means ensuring sustainable and inclusive development for all Timorese people, while simultaneously promoting a healthy ocean grounded in scientific knowledge.

Complementing this vision, Timor-Leste adopts the following motto:

“Timor is the Sea! Timor, Blue, Sustainable and Innovative”, where TASI simultaneously means “sea” in Tetum and represents the Portuguese acronym for Timor, Azul, Sustentável e Inovador.

The main **objective** of the Policy and Action Plan for the Promotion of a Resilient and Sustainable Ocean Economy in Timor-Leste is to:

Define and implement integrated and strategic policies and initiatives, drawing on scientific and community-based knowledge, to transform maritime and coastal areas under Timor-Leste’s jurisdiction into sources of sustainable and inclusive economic, social, and environmental development opportunities.

This objective is particularly relevant given that, as a Least Developed Country (LDC) and a Small Island Developing State (SIDS), Timor-Leste faces heightened challenges arising from climate change.

For this reason, the Government of Timor-Leste assumes the **mission** to:

Promote knowledge, protection, conservation, and the sustainable use of marine and coastal natural resources at national and international levels, thereby ensuring the dual objective of resilience to climate change and economic, social, and environmental development for present and future generations.

Strategic Framework for the Blue Economy of Timor-Leste

Vision	Investing in the growth of coastal, marine, and maritime sectors means ensuring sustainable and inclusive development for all Timorese people
Objective	Define and implement integrated and strategic policies and initiatives, drawing on scientific and community-based knowledge, capable of transforming maritime and coastal areas under Timor-Leste’s jurisdiction into sources of sustainable and inclusive economic, social, and environmental development opportunities.
Mission	Promote knowledge, protection, conservation, and the sustainable use of marine and coastal natural resources at national and international levels, thereby ensuring the dual objective of resilience to climate change and economic, social, and environmental development for present and future generations.

AXES, PILLARS, AND STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES OF THE BLUE ECONOMY

The implementation strategy of the Policy and Action Plan includes four main axes that structure the vision and are organised into guiding pillars with specific objectives.

AXIS 1: RESEARCH, EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION (KNOWING THE SEA)

Protecting, conserving, and promoting the marine and coastal environment requires an understanding of natural capital and the importance of the services provided by ecosystems, in order to foster economic development that makes sustainable use of natural resources.

The balance between sustainable economic development and the ocean's capacity to support diverse human activities defines the Blue Economy. Accordingly, only through sound science is it possible to gain a deeper understanding of the sea (Tasi) adjacent to the national territory — the national maritime space — and, more broadly, of the ocean of which we are a part. Such understanding is a prerequisite for informed decision-making that results in effective public policies.

Furthermore, contributing to sustainable development requires the promotion of education for children and young people on the importance of the ocean and its relevance to planetary health and balance. It is essential that children, young people, and citizens in general have access to knowledge, skills, and values that foster respect for nature, particularly respect for the marine environment.

Creating a “blue generation” requires work on school and academic curricula, as well as the promotion of training initiatives for teachers (supported by appropriate educational resources and materials), in order to develop knowledge, critical thinking skills, and, consequently, behavioural change.

Finally, communicating this knowledge and deepening ocean culture will enable Timorese people to reconnect with their sea and to explore all related opportunities — not only in terms of income and employment, but also in relation to the sustainable use of marine resources.

Communicating the Blue Economy will promote greater understanding, cooperation, and national management of existing marine resources, thereby safeguarding them for future generations.

Pillar 1: Marine Scientific Research

- Legal Framework for International Marine Scientific Research
- Survey and Study on Marine Biodiversity in Timor-Leste

Pillar 2: Education, Training and Strategic Communication

- Education and Vocational Training
- Marine Research and Education Centres
- Marine and Underwater Cultural Heritage
- Strategic Communication and Ocean Culture

AXIS 2: PRESERVATION AND CONSERVATION OF MARINE BIODIVERSITY (RESPECTING THE SEA)

The intrinsic and ancestral relationship between culture and marine ecosystems in Timor-Leste constitutes an added value for the sustainable development process of the nation and its people, and for achieving the objectives of the Policy and Action Plan for the Promotion of a Resilient and Sustainable Ocean Economy in Timor-Leste.

Timor-Leste is committed to ocean protection and the preservation of marine biodiversity at national, regional, and global levels.

The fundamental principles enshrined in the Constitution, those guiding the existing legal framework, and the international commitments assumed by Timor-Leste reflect a synergy between knowledge and cultural practices related to the sea, the values and aspirations of the Timorese people, and political commitment to environmental conservation, preservation, and the sustainable use of natural resources.

The legal recognition of *Tara Bandu*, a traditional custom integral to Timor-Leste's culture that regulates the relationship between people and their surrounding environment and is applied to the preservation of terrestrial and marine ecosystems, reflects this context.

Environmental protection and marine biodiversity conservation refer to the measures adopted to preserve and conserve natural resources, flora, fauna, and marine habitats, involving awareness-raising, preservation, and the sustainable use of the ocean, seas, rivers, estuaries, and associated ecosystems.

Within this framework, marine and coastal management and protection will be undertaken, commonly defined as a set of practices, policies, and strategies relating to the conservation and sustainable use of marine resources and coastal areas.

Appropriate measures will be adopted to strengthen the preservation and conservation of marine biodiversity, including national maritime spatial planning and management — the backbone of the Blue Economy — through an integrated and ecosystem-based approach to maritime space, ensuring effective land–sea interaction, and the review of Marine Protected Areas in the country, in order to formalise their designation and define and implement their management plans.

The legal framework governing maritime spatial planning and management will constitute a fundamental pillar for the sustainable development of the ocean economy in Timor-Leste, articulated with other relevant sectoral areas such as environment, economy, energy, tourism, and others.

Marine Protected Areas are an essential instrument for the promotion and preservation of the marine environment and must be applied in a complementary manner, together with the legal framework for maritime spatial planning and management.

In summary, biodiversity conservation constitutes a central element of the Policy and Action Plan for the Promotion of a Resilient and Sustainable Ocean Economy in Timor-Leste, serving as a transversal pillar of good governance.

Pillar 3: Marine and Coastal Management and Protection

- National Maritime Spatial Planning and Management
- Marine Protected Areas
- Transboundary Cooperation
- Strengthening Environmental Impact Assessment Regimes

Pillar 4: Marine Biodiversity Conservation

- Coral Reefs
- Mangroves
- Algae and Seaweed
- Cetaceans, Turtles, Sharks, Dugongs, and Other Marine Species

Pillar 5: Combating Marine Pollution and Waste Management

Pillar 6: Carbon Sequestration

AXIS 3: SUSTAINABLE USE (LIVING WITH THE SEA)

The country is fortunate to possess natural resources such as gas and oil reserves, whose revenues have supported national development for more than two decades. However, these natural resources are finite, and therefore the Government is committed to investing in economic diversification, namely through the Blue Economy.

The aim is for Timorese communities to strengthen their relationship with the sea in order to fully harness the opportunities for sustainable development it offers. This includes, beyond biodiversity preservation and conservation, opportunities for the sustainable use of marine resources, leading to outcomes such as job creation, income generation, and improvements in socio-economic conditions, including in the sectors of health, education, culture, sport, and leisure.

Accordingly, the Government will invest in the development of fisheries, aquaculture, tourism, and renewable energy sectors, which will generate additional economic returns and other benefits for Timor-Leste. This includes investment in new economic and industrial sectors, encouraging national private sector development and foreign direct investment in the country.

This strategy includes strengthening international cooperation through the sharing of knowledge, experience, and investment, with the ocean as a common denominator. The ocean connects Timor-Leste to the world and the world to Timor-Leste, including in addressing shared challenges that threaten the security, stability, and sustainable development of many nations, particularly Small Island Developing States and Least Developed Countries.

Pillar 7: Blue Tourism

- Coastal Tourism
- Maritime or Nautical Tourism
- Nature Tourism

Pillar 8: Exploration of Living Resources

- Fisheries and Aquaculture
- Marine Biotechnology

Pillar 9: Exploration of Non-Living Resources and Energy Production

- Hydrocarbon Production
- Renewable Energy
- Salt Production
- Mining
- Desalination

Pillar 10: Maritime Transport and Port and Logistics Development

- Infrastructure
- Port and Logistics Development
- Maritime Transport and Navigation
- Shipbuilding and Ship Repair

Pillar 11: Maritime Security

- Capacity-building, Surveillance and Enforcement
- Monitoring and International Cooperation

AXIS 4: SUPPORTING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BLUE ECONOMY (TRANSVERSAL PILLARS)

Pillar 12: Water and Basic Sanitation

The development of the Blue Economy depends, to a large extent, on adequate basic sanitation capable of ensuring that coastal and inland waters do not become contaminated by waste and polluted as a result of sewage systems.

The conservation of marine and aquatic ecosystems, including their species and biodiversity, depends on appropriate wastewater treatment and efficient solid waste management, so that these do not undermine the sustainability of key ecosystems, ranging from mangroves to habitats in transitional areas and coral reefs, among others.

Indeed, it may be stated that there can be no Blue Economy without adequate basic sanitation, including treatment and protection of national water resources.

In summary, basic sanitation and the blue economy are closely interconnected. Efficient sanitation systems are essential to guarantee the protection and sustainability of water resources, which are also fundamental to the economic development of communities that depend upon them.

Pillar 13: Management and Conservation of Wetlands and Transitional Zones

The Blue Economy is a holistic and interdependent approach that links terrestrial and marine ecosystems. This means that, to promote truly sustainable and harmonious development across the country, it is necessary to align activities in inland areas, including mountainous zones, since these can affect ocean health and vice versa.

The Government considers that an integrated perspective for the management and conservation of wetlands and transitional zones can lead to improved environmental management and conservation practices, benefiting local communities.

Accordingly, the Government will take into consideration:

- River basins and the hydrological cycle, recognising that water flowing from mountains through rivers to the sea conditions the health of marine ecosystems. For this reason, sustainable water resource management and the conservation of river basins in mountainous and riverine areas are crucial to ensure the quality of water reaching the sea. Moreover, river basin degradation contributes to pollution and biodiversity loss.
- Economic and domestic activities, including agricultural, forestry, and industrial practices in mountainous areas and near riverbanks, as well as pollution arising from poor solid waste management (such as plastics) and sediments from eroded areas that enter rivers and groundwater.
- Protection and clean-up actions in wetlands and coastal and transitional areas, which depend on sustainable practices upstream, in order to prevent heavy rainfall periods from carrying waste into the sea.
- Climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Sustainable development through the Blue Economy must include the promotion of sustainable practices throughout the entire chain, following the “path of water” from springs to the sea — that is, from mountains and inland waters to coastal and transitional zones and the ocean.

Pillar 14: Rural Development, Trade and Industry

The blue economy, as noted repeatedly, refers to an economic model that values the sustainable use of marine resources, promotes economic growth and social inclusion, and preserves marine ecosystems.

This economic development strategy can become a strong ally in rural development, especially in regions where marine resources are a fundamental part of local life and the local economy. Activities such as sustainable fisheries, aquaculture, marine tourism, and

the exploration of marine resources can create jobs and generate income for rural communities, which comprise the majority of Timor-Leste's population.

From the dual perspective of sustainability and rural development, the blue economy offers alternatives to traditional agriculture, enabling communities to diversify their income sources and reduce dependence on a single activity.

Furthermore, the development of activities linked to the blue economy can encourage investment in infrastructure such as ports, roads, and transport services, benefiting not only the exploitation of marine resources but also improving access to markets and services for rural communities.

The creation of cooperatives and industries, and the promotion of trade, play crucial roles in this context, particularly from the standpoint of private sector involvement and job creation, which are fundamental to economic diversification in areas such as fisheries and marine cultivation, as well as in other industries including marine tourism, canning industries, renewable energy, and marine biotechnology, among other opportunities that generate employment and business opportunities and promote local economic development.

The blue economy industry drives research and the development of new technologies for the exploration and sustainable use of marine resources. This includes innovations in biotechnology, environmental monitoring technologies, and sustainable production methods, in order to strengthen trade in ocean-derived products such as fish, algae/seaweed, biofuels, and pharmaceutical products, which may be commercialised globally. International trade can generate significant revenues for coastal countries, while also promoting the exchange of knowledge and best practices.

For this strategy to be successful, coordinated strategies for development at the level of coastal and port infrastructure are required, enabling transport and logistics while not undermining initiatives that promote environmental conservation and protection.

In summary, trade and industry are fundamental to blue economy development, as they not only contribute to economic growth but also promote sustainability and the conservation of marine resources. Integrating sustainable practices into such activities is essential to ensure that the ocean remains a source of wealth and wellbeing for future generations.

Pillar 15: Ocean Satellite Account

The establishment of an Ocean Satellite Account is essential to measure the expression of the Blue Economy within Timor-Leste's national economy and its contribution to job creation, and also to verify compliance with other measurable objectives established by the Government across sectoral domains.

Importantly, the Ocean Satellite Account constitutes a statistical instrument for data compilation and analysis, adhering to the most appropriate accounting concepts and developed in accordance with best accounting practices.

The Government will approve a Council of Ministers Resolution establishing the Ocean Satellite Account, and the National Institute of Statistics of Timor-Leste will be responsible for preparing this important statistical instrument, in collaboration with other relevant sectoral bodies and services.

The Ocean Satellite Account will be published every three years, without prejudice to the annual compilation of data enabling closer monitoring of the statistical evolution of the Blue Economy.

This strategy will make it possible to measure ocean-based economic activities for purposes such as innovation and the development of strategic approaches. Accordingly, the Government considers it essential to assess the gross output, value added, and employment generated by the Blue Economy in relation to the national economy, in order to measure its overall contribution.

At present, Timor-Leste does not have the detailed data required to disaggregate specific indicators for Blue Economy activities and their contributions to national production; the Government therefore intends to address this issue gradually.

Pillar 16: Planning, Financing and Monitoring Instruments

Planning, financing, and monitoring of the Policy and Action Plan for the Promotion of a Resilient and Sustainable Ocean Economy in Timor-Leste will require a dedicated timetable. This will include an action plan defining priorities and the corresponding short-, medium-, and long-term measures, and will also serve to align necessary investments with the budgetary constraints affecting public expenditure.

Accordingly, and without prejudice to programmes and projects to be developed with Timor-Leste's Development Partners, as well as projects arising from private initiative or the private sector, and from local and international NGOs, it is necessary to select priorities for blue economy development during the present legislature, together with their respective financing sources.

Effectiveness and sustainability in implementing the Blue Economy Policy require the adoption of a set of structural and operational measures ensuring institutional coordination, community ownership, and the technical capacity-building of the different actors involved. This is necessary to ensure that political ambition is translated into real and lasting impact, underpinned by a governance model that is effective and inclusive.

A preliminary analysis of the current landscape of Blue Economy financing in Timor-Leste will be undertaken, in order to identify national public resources, assistance from development partners, and private sector investment, and to assess how these flows are currently focused on the Blue Economy, or could be redirected towards it through bilateral, regional, and international negotiations.

For this reason, it is first necessary to communicate Government priorities not only to enable alignment by major Development Partners, but also to improve investors' understanding of market opportunities in Timor-Leste, thereby reducing perceptions of investment risk and potential concerns regarding insufficient support and commitment on the part of the public sector.

On the demand side, there are gaps in knowledge, capacity, and awareness regarding business and investment opportunities linked to the Blue Economy. Through its policy and action plan, the Government intends to address these gaps by defining priorities to channel options towards “bankable” projects, together with support measures or subsidies to be defined, such as reductions in tax rates for sectors such as electricity, rents, and others to be determined, so that the public sector becomes an effective partner in financing activities to be developed in the country.

The Blue Economy also serves as an incentive for the development of the national private sector, which remains significantly underdeveloped. Moreover, the Government believes that, through its strategic objectives for the Blue Economy, it will be possible to attract greater foreign direct investment, generating benefits for all stakeholders, with direct consequences for improving the living conditions of all Timorese people.

Action Plan for the Blue Economy

The Action Plan establishes Strategic Objectives, measures, and actions for the next ten years, identifying the governmental entities responsible for implementation, in coordination with their partners, including a timetable and the main indicators and expected results.

Accordingly, the final part of the “Policy and Action Plan for the Promotion of a Resilient and Sustainable Ocean Economy in Timor-Leste” summarises these elements in a table, in order to establish an implementation roadmap for sustainable national development. This roadmap is to be reflected in the annual plans of ministries and government agencies and in their financing, monitoring, and evaluation plans — conditions that are fundamental not only for implementing the strategic framework for the blue economy, but also for ensuring essential oversight by Civil Society and validation within a democratic State governed by the rule of law.





Land and Maritime Boundary Office
Government of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste

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