



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

# TIMOR-LESTE



- USAID support over the past 20 years has helped establish a sustainable coffee export sector in Timor-Leste, benefiting more than 23,000 farmers.
- USAID's horticulture project helped farmers increase their incomes by up to 400 percent, enabling them to improve their families' nutrition and send their children to school.
- USAID contributed to Timor-Leste's successful eradication of polio in 2014.
- Since 2006, USAID has trained more than 10,000 health workers in new practices that improve maternal, neonatal and child health care quality.

Photo credit: Cristóvão Guerres/USAID

## Country Profile

Located between Indonesia and Australia, Timor-Leste is one of the world's newest countries, having gained independence in 2002 after decades of conflict. Its population is one of the world's poorest, and the country is working to build its new democracy with still-nascent institutions and limited human capital. The United States is committed to helping Timor-Leste realize its development goals and emerge as a strong, regional partner.

USAID supports Timor-Leste in its efforts to build a more prosperous, healthy and democratic nation through programs that foster inclusive and sustainable economic growth, especially in the agriculture sector; improve the health of the Timorese people, particularly women and children; and strengthen the foundations of good governance.

### OUR WORK

A small nation occupying half of an island in Maritime Southeast Asia, Timor-Leste is home to a young and culturally diverse population of about 1.2 million people. USAID's strong history of partnership with Timor-Leste began even prior to the country's independence in 2002. Since independence, USAID has supported Timor-Leste's efforts to establish strong, democratic institutions and a viable economy.

Timor-Leste's economic growth over the past decade has been fueled by its petroleum resources. However, nascent state institutions, limited human and organizational capacity, and poor infrastructure constrain broad-based economic growth. Roughly half of Timor-Leste's people live in extreme poverty, due in large part to a lack of non-farm employment opportunities. Widespread poverty contributes to poor health and chronic malnutrition—both key drivers of stunted growth, where children have truncated height and weight for their age. Timor-Leste has one of the world's worst rates of stunting for children less than 5 years of age—58 percent are stunted, and 33 percent are severely stunted.

In support of accelerated economic development, USAID works closely with the government and people of Timor-Leste to improve agricultural productivity; encourage private-sector competitiveness; tackle serious health challenges, particularly those affecting women and children; strengthen sub-national democratic institutions and good governance practices, including anti-corruption systems; protect the environment; and help at-risk populations adapt to climate change.

## ECONOMIC GROWTH AND TRADE

As approximately 70 percent of Timor-Leste's population relies on agriculture for their livelihoods, USAID focuses on accelerating inclusive economic growth for farm households in the country's rural areas. Our partnerships, including with the Government of New Zealand and ConocoPhillips, support activities aimed at boosting output above subsistence levels and improving incomes by increasing farm productivity and establishing links to markets. Additionally, we provide training and information to rural households to increase household consumption of nutritious foods.

## GLOBAL HEALTH

Health indicators in Timor-Leste are still among the worst in the Asia-Pacific region, especially for women and children. According to Timor-Leste's Demographic and Health Survey 2009-10, Timor-Leste has the highest maternal and under-5 mortality rates in Southeast Asia (557 deaths per 100,000 live births and 64 deaths per 1,000 live births, respectively). The country's poor health statistics are driven by low immunization coverage, neonatal complications, and the prevalence of pneumonia and diarrhea, which is compounded by high malnutrition rates. However, the country is making progress. Between 1990 and 2010, Timor-Leste achieved the largest reduction in under-5 mortality rates in the world. Between 2011 and 2013, USAID helped increase DPT3 (diphtheria, whooping cough and tetanus), measles and polio vaccination coverage for infants by more than 10 percent in targeted areas, contributing to the country's successful eradication of polio in 2014. In partnership with the Government of Timor-Leste, USAID trains health workers to strengthen maternal, neonatal, child and reproductive health services, particularly in rural areas.

## DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS AND GOVERNANCE

Since independence, Timor-Leste has faced daunting challenges to establishing a viable state and a representative democracy. Nonetheless, progress has been made with Timor-Leste conducting multiple free and fair elections, most recently in 2012. Yet the country still lacks the fundamental governance systems essential to adequately respond to persistently high rates of poverty, unemployment, growing socioeconomic inequality and unresolved conflict. The country faces challenges upholding human rights, reducing impunity and increasing access to basic public services. USAID partners with the Government of Timor-Leste to build the resiliency of democratic institutions and further consolidate good governance practices. USAID also partners with the judiciary and legal service providers in Timor-Leste to facilitate access to justice for rural populations.

## CONTACTS

### Mission

John Seong, Mission Director  
USAID/Timor-Leste  
Sergio Vieira De Mello Rd.  
Farol, Dili, Timor-Leste  
Phone: +670 332-2211 • Fax: +670 332-2216  
E-mail: [usaid-timor-leste-info@usaid.gov](mailto:usaid-timor-leste-info@usaid.gov)

### Headquarters

Julie Pekowski, Desk Officer  
U.S. Agency for International Development  
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC, USA 20523  
Phone: (202) 712-5377  
E-mail: [jpekowski@usaid.gov](mailto:jpekowski@usaid.gov)



USAID helped introduce a wet suit-like garment that is saving the lives of women suffering from postpartum hemorrhage in remote communities by aiding circulation. Photo credit: Dr. Teodulo C. Ximenes



USAID is helping over 33,000 people in 250 communities earn higher incomes, improve their nutrition, and manage their economic assets more effectively. Photo credit: USAID's Avansa Agrikultura Project