



USAID | TIMOR-LESTE

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Mission Overview



The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) plays the lead role in providing bilateral assistance from the United States to Timor-Leste, a new nation struggling to establish a democratic state with an open and free economy.

Timor-Leste became independent in 2002, after 24 years of Indonesian occupation and two years of UN stewardship. The “new country of the new millennium” has come a long way since the violence and destruction of 1999, but much remains to be done: despite its significant offshore oil reserves, it is one of the world’s poorest countries; its newly established public institutions are still weak; and it has some of the highest rates of maternal, infant, and child mortality in the world.

Since 2000, the U.S. Government has provided over \$250 million of assistance to Timor-Leste, a vast majority of which was managed by USAID. While the first year of assistance was devoted mostly to post-conflict recovery, the next four years aimed to transition to long-term sustainable development. Unfortunately, violence broke out anew in 2006, displacing over 150,000 people from their homes. USAID is responding to the humanitarian needs of Timor-Leste’s internally displaced persons to this day and continues to support the country’s long-term development.

Currently, the USAID program in Timor-Leste includes three areas of strategic focus:

- Accelerating Economic Growth
- Strengthening Key Foundations of Governance
- Improving the Health of the Timorese People, especially women and children

Projects are implemented by a network of partners. In late 2005, Timor-Leste was one of 23 countries worldwide designated as fully eligible for assistance from the Millennium Challenge Account (MCA). In spite of the political and security crisis that began in April 2006, the country maintained its eligibility. To remain eligible for MCA funds, Timor-Leste must continue to perform well on the MCA’s selection criteria.