



OVERVIEW

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) Mission in Timor-Leste began its operation in the country in August 1999. During that time, IOM provided return and reintegration assistance during the post-referendum violence; contributed to the disarmament of combatants; undertaken various community stabilization and infrastructure programs; as well as responded to supporting internally displaced persons following the civil unrest around 2006-2007.

Timor-Leste is characterized by dynamic migration flows, as the country is experiencing an increased rate of cross-border movement of people and goods, as a result of steadily expanding trade and investment, rapidly increasing labour and student mobility, as well as growing cultural and economic ties with other countries. While the increased mobility brings many developmental benefits, it also poses border security challenges including transnational organized crimes.

Timor-Leste is both a sender and recipient of migrant workers, and the Government of Timor-Leste (GoTL) recognizes the need to have solid policies to protect them, both within Timor-Leste and Timorese migrants abroad.

Key issues and priorities of the GoTL, with IOM support, around migration and governance include, but are not limited to:



Migration Governance



Migration and Health



Emergency and Post-Crisis



Labour Migration














Immigration and Border Governance









Migration Environment and Climate Change

KEY MIGRATION FACTS

 INTERNATIONAL MIGRANTS IN TIMOR-LESTE IN 2020 8,300	 EMIGRANTS/TIMORESE LIVING ABROAD IN 2020 39,588	 KEY POINTS OF ENTRY (POE) AND BORDER CROSSING POINTS (BCPS) The Nicolau Lobato International Airport, Batugade, Salele, Sakato	 COMMUNITY-BASED TUBERCULOSIS SCREENING CONDUCTED THROUGH IOM PROJECT (2020-2022) 68,196
 IOM-ASSISTED RETURNEES AND REINTEGRATION SINCE 1999 190,000	 INTERNAL DISPLACED PERSONS ASSISTED BY IOM IN 2008 5,930 households	 INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS RATIFIED <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UN Convention relating to the Status of Refugee, 1951 in 2003; • UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), 1989 in 2003; • UN International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Member of Their Families (ICRMW), 1990 in 2004. 	 TUBERCULOSIS CASES IDENTIFIED THROUGH IOM PROJECT (2020-2022) 1,221
 REMITTANCES IN 2021 171 million USD	 LABOUR MOBILITY SCHEMES OF WHICH TIMOR-LESTE IS A MEMBER The Employment Permit System (EPS) with South Korea and the Pacific Labour Scheme (PLF) with Australia.		 NON-FOOD ITEMS KITS PREPOSITIONED 900 for 4,500 families

DRIVERS OF MIGRATION

 Lack of job and study opportunities	 Underdevelopment
 Declining agricultural and fishing livelihoods	 Crime and violence
 Poor infrastructure	 Family reasons

MIGRATION MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE, NATIONAL STRATEGIES

IOM provides support to the GoTL in multi-area of migration policies, which include, for example:

- National Disaster Risk Management Strategy 2023
- Victim Identification Guidelines (Trafficking in Persons) 2022
- Immigration and Border Management Strategy 2022
- National Diaspora Engagement Policy 2022
- Labour Mobility Policy 2016



IOM also commissioned the Migration Profile of Timor-Leste, developed and implemented by the GoTL to improve national programming, planning and policymaking for enhancing migration management.

Other legal and policy frameworks which address migration and mobility—such as Law on Immigration and Asylum, Anti-Human Trafficking Law—have already been into force. Timor-Leste is also party and signatory to several international agreements, conventions and treaties on migration and/or migrant protection.

EMERGENCY AND POST-CRISIS

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) has been working on disaster risk management since 2008. IOM has established strong and collaborative partnerships with the Government of Timor-Leste (GoTL) especially the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Social Solidarity and Inclusion, Civil Protection Authority, National Directorate of Meteorology and Geophysics, National Directorate of Climate Change, as well as civil society organizations including the Timor-Leste Red Cross (CVTL).

Currently, IOM implements five projects contributing to the GoTL's capacity in disaster risk management and climate change adaptation. Strategic institutional mechanisms are being improved through the provision of technical assistance in the development of guidelines, standard operating procedures, and policies on DRR, emergency preparedness, migration, environment, and climate change (MECC). Capacity-building activities are identified to strengthen stakeholders in all levels of implementation at the national, subnational (districts and suco), and communities. Community-driven initiatives on climate change, early warning systems, information management, and assessments are piloted to serve as proof of concept for institutionalization. Research on mobility and coastal change data is ongoing to provide for an evidence-based approach to migration resulting from coastal change. At the same time, the assignment will assist in stakeholder engagement including government entities, civil society partners, other UN agencies, donors, working groups, clusters, and other meetings to promote MECC, DRR, emergency preparedness, and humanitarian/emergency response.



IMMIGRATION AND BORDER GOVERNANCE

Timor-Leste is characterized by dynamic migration flows, with a continuously increasing rate of cross-border movement of people and goods. While increased mobility brings several developmental benefits, it also poses challenges to immigration and border governance.

Under the Immigration and Border Governance (IBG) unit, IOM provides support to the GoTL, with funding from the Department of Home Affairs, Australian Government, to increase its capacity in immigration and border management by installing the Migration

Information Data Analysis System (MIDAS). It is an integrated and functioning border management information system connecting the country's Migration Services in Dili (HQ) to four Points of Entry: Batugade Ground Crossing, Sakato Ground Crossing (Oecussi), Dili International Airport and Salele Ground Crossing.

IOM is also providing support to the GoTL on efforts to prevent irregular movement while facilitating legal ones. It requires strong institutional and legal frameworks, human and technical capacity and inter-agency coordination. Through Strengthening Integrated Border Management (IBM), IOM conducted assessment to understand the current state of border management in the country and identify gaps. IOM developed a National Action Plan for IBM and Standard Operating Procedures for inter-agency coordination, along with training and capacity building activities. IOM also provided the country with the Verifier Travel Document and Bearer (TD&B), a secondary document inspection tool to support identification of fraudulent travel document.

The cross-cutting issue such as the nexus between border management and health emergency is also part of IBG program in which IOM contributed to the GoTL's efforts to reduce the risk of cross-border disease transmission, in line with the UN Timor-Leste's COVID-19 Outbreak Multi-Sectoral Response Plan. The project was centered around three key components: (1) capacity building for frontline border officials, (2) flow monitoring for evidence-based health interventions and (3) increasing knowledge on symptoms and preventive measures at the Point of Entries (PoEs).

MIGRATION AND HEALTH

With 486 per 100,000 population have Tuberculosis (TB), Timor-Leste has the highest cases of Tuberculosis in the region, making it a major public concern. In response, IOM through Community-Based Active Case Detection and Management of Tuberculosis (TB) in Timor-Leste project is actively conducting systematic screening to hard-to-reach areas across municipalities. IOM contributes to ensuring that health facilities have the necessary equipment, all community members have access to information and treatment, as well as capacity building activities are delivered to health service personnel and volunteers.



IOM staff explains the importance of Tuberculosis screenings to local communities in Ermera. © IOM/Maulana Iberahim 2022



The launch event of Integrated National Financing Framework and Financial Diversification in Timor-Leste. © IOM 2022

LABOUR MIGRATION

Through Integrated National Financing Framework (INFF) and Financial Diversification in Timor-Leste project, IOM, in partnership with UNDP and World Health Organization (WHO), has worked to establish gender responsive and systematic reform to increase diaspora engagement and direct financing toward sustainable development. The work has included partaking in the development of the Diaspora Policy and the Diaspora National Action Plan and supporting the GoTL's effort in diaspora mapping and profiling. The data collected then laid the foundation for development the Diaspora Engagement and Remittance Mobilization Strategy.

MIGRATION ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Timor-Leste is at high risk of experiencing coastal flooding and storm, which can cause large economic, social and ecological loss. Through Addressing Environmental Migration Resulting from Coastal Change in Timor-Leste project, IOM has worked to strengthen local climate change adaptation in coastal communities by enhancing evidence-based information for at-risk communities. A remote sensing-based coastline change assessment was conducted to mitigate the impacts of coastal change and foster preparedness under the environmental migration management framework.



Simulation exercise on the International Day of Disaster Risk Reduction. ©IOM/Elisabeth Araújo 2020