

## Chapter 37

# Tourism in East Timor: Post-Conflict Perspectives

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### ABSTRACT

*The objective of this chapter is to organize, analyze and discuss information on tourism development in the Democratic Republic of East Timor, based on efforts from “development partners” countries between 2007 and 2011, principles of 2011 Development Strategic Plan (PED) and government programs from 2007 on. The analytical framework emerges from discussions on tourism in post-conflict countries and dependence and autonomy issues within post-colonial contexts. From a methodological perspective, reflections on East Timor are result of reading and government programs analysis since 2007, PED (2011-2030) and international cooperation reports from May 2012. In short, one observes in parallel to the slow growth of tourism in the island and the increase of the relevance of this issue in national documents that objective actions on behalf of tourism development in East Timor have been virtually absent in terms of international cooperation— even though they have been indirectly identifiable.*

### INTRODUCTION

East Timor is a small insular country in Southeast Asia, located between northern Australia and eastern Indonesia (Sunda Islands), occupying 15,000km<sup>2</sup>, consisting of two parts of Timor Island: half east and the Oe-Cusse enclave on the west, besides Ataúro Island on the north and Jaco Islet the east. Nowadays, the country has approximately 1.1 million people, speaking over twenty languages, among which the most expressive ones are Tétum, Mambae and Makasai. In 2002, the Constitution of the Democratic Republic of East Timor established Portuguese and Tétum as official languages, but Bahasa Indonesia, English and – to a far lesser extent – Mandarin are still used.

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## ***Tourism in East Timor***

With over 70% of population living in the countryside, the country is divided in thirteen districts and 62 sub-districts, and has only two expressive urban agglomerations: Díli, the capital with approximately 230,000 inhabitants, and Baucau, 80km East of Díli, with approximately 60,000 inhabitants. The northern coast of the island is connected by road, linking the Indonesian border, in the city of Batugadé (Figure 1), with far East in Tutuala, from where one accesses Jaco Islet (Figure 2).

The South Coast has fewer infrastructures however, but with the perspective of the oil sector development on-shore, it is expected that new cities such as Nova Suai, Nova Betano and Nova Viqueque will be built (Lao Hamutuk, 2013). Nowadays, off-shore oil production in Mar do Sul is the country's economic mainstay, accounting for almost 100% of revenues, virtually the main export product (plus,

*Figure 1. Timorese-Indonesian border at Butugadé*

(Source: Thiago Allis, 2012)



*Figure 2. Partial view of Jaco Islet*

(Source: Thiago Allis, 2012)



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