

# DIVE OPERATORS WORKING GROUP

## About Dive Operators Working Group

The Dive Operators' Working Group (DOWG) is comprised of six dive tour operators in Dili. It was formed as a platform for collaboration to coordinate marketing and promotional activities on dive tourism, to attract more international divers to Timor-Leste, and to liaise with the government on dive site conservation issues. Despite some work in this area, conservation has become a pressing concern as laws or policies aren't enforced to protect reef and pelagic species from overfishing, dumping, construction and other non-biodegradable waste.





## Market Constraints

Located in the Coral Triangle, Timor-Leste has some of the most bio-diverse marine life in the world. But among scuba enthusiasts, Timor-Leste remains relatively unknown. With the quest to find unique and unspoilt dive sites that are off the beaten track, there is great potential for diving to attract more visitors to the country.

Along with challenges with destination marketing, dive tourism is hampered by high flight costs, inconsistent visa processes and a lack of available information about the country generally. This is compounded by poor protection of dive sites, particularly the shore-based sites that are susceptible to degradation from road construction.

## Intervention

### FOSTERING DIVE INDUSTRY COLLABORATION

-  Supporting dive industry advocacy and better dive site management
-  Joint marketing efforts

MDF has supported the DOWG with important discussions around the management of road construction to ensure dive site conservation, attendance at strategic tourism expos in Australia, with plans for further participation at events in Asia and Europe, organising strategic events in Timor-Leste and is encouraging dialogue with the Ministry of Tourism and other public institutions to facilitate better understanding of the dive industry and develop relationship(s) with the dive businesses.

