

Portugal supports Timor-Leste to identify mineral resources in Oecusse

The Timor-Leste Institute of Geosciences (IGTL) and Portugal's National Energy and Geology Laboratory (LNEG) are identifying metallic mineral resources in the Oecusse enclave, namely chromium, nickel, copper and gold

Lusa, 12 Mar. 2025. Machine translation from Portuguese

"As Portugal's geological survey, LNEG is working together with IGTL to prospect for mineral resources in Timor-Leste. This work is the result of a memorandum of understanding that IGTL and LNEG signed in March 2024", the president of that Timorese institute, Job Brites dos Santos, told Lusa.

According to the official, after the signing of the memorandum of understanding, an implementation agreement was soon established to define the works related to the prospecting of mineral resources in Oecusse, located in the Indonesian part of the island of Timor.

"As part of this joint work, we have already carried out an initial study or reconnaissance in Oecusse and we have managed to detect some related areas with the potential to have minerals such as chromium, nickel, copper and gold," he explained.

Asked about the economic value of these mineral resources, Job Brites dos Santos stated that he cannot yet determine their exact value, but highlighted their strategic importance.

"Right now, there is a huge need for the production of these minerals for military equipment, electric vehicles and to support renewable energy production," he said.

The official said that a technician from LNEG is in Timor-Leste to continue the study, with a more detailed analysis of the areas already identified with mineral potential.

"We will carry out a detailed study to assess the economic value of the mineral resources we have already detected," he added.

Regarding the possibility of metallic mineral resources in other regions of the country, the president of IGTL explained that the studies will be carried out in stages.

"We started in Oecusse and we will also carry out a reconnaissance study in the municipalities of Maliana, Aileu and others. The scientific study has complex phases and, therefore, we are focusing first on Oecusse and, later, we will move on to Maliana and other areas", he explained.

The official also said that 22 Timorese completed their master's degrees in geology at the University of Coimbra, with the aim of increasing knowledge in the area, including prospecting and identification of mineral resources.