



Diaspora engagement mapping CABO VERDE

Facts & figures

Terminology: Cabo Verde refers to its citizens abroad as Cabo Verdeans abroad or the Cabo Verdean diaspora (Portuguese: *Diáspora cabo-verdiana*).

Political rights



Dual citizenship¹



Right to vote in national elections for citizens residing abroad³



Remittances



Remittances as a share of GDP: **12.25%**
Remittances inflow (USD million): **333.99**

Voting from abroad:

At embassies/consulates



Data disclaimer

As diaspora definitions vary widely, we have chosen to use comparable data on emigration as a proxy. This does not include all who consider themselves diaspora and is not necessarily aligned with national definitions of diaspora. Emigration data comes from UNDESA (2024) and remittances from the World Bank (2024).

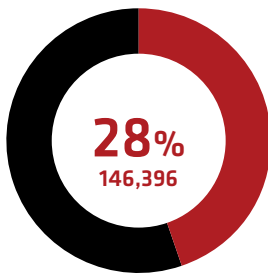
Emigration



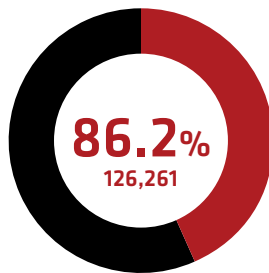
% of emigrants in total population²



% of which in the EU



♂ 45.4%
♀ 54.6%



♂ 44.6%
♀ 55.4%

Top countries of destination⁴



Portugal	76,835
France	34,814
Angola	9,497
Luxembourg	8,211
Mozambique	7,107

1 The constitution of Cabo Verde allows dual citizenship for its diaspora and also states that 'No one who is Cabo Verdean by origin may be deprived of nationality or of the prerogatives of citizenship. (Art. 40). . English version available at: <http://confinder.richmond.edu/admin/docs/CapeVerde.pdf>.

2 It is important to mention that numbers on emigration and diaspora vary greatly in Cabo Verde due to its long diaspora history. Accordingly, the total size of the diaspora is close to 120% out of which over one third is based in Europe. Source: <https://www.pewresearch.org/topics/global-migration-and-demography/> From UN Migration Estimated Statistics for 2017..

3 Article 108 of the Constitution states that the President of the Republic is elected by universal suffrage, by citizen voters registered in the national territory and abroad.

4 Source: From UNDESA Migration Stock Statistics for 2019 https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/data/estimates2/data/UN_MigrantStockByOriginAndDestination_2019.xlsx . Senegal is another significant country of destination.

Overview of the policy and legislative framework



- 2004** ● **Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (GPRS)**⁶ sets out the importance of the diaspora; it includes references to participative processes for diaspora input into policy planning processes. However, the GPRS and its subsequent iterations remain largely aspirational, having generic goals and lacking an operational or implementation plan for diaspora mobilization.
- 2007** ● **Decree-Law n° 35/2007** institutionalized the Casa do Cidadão ('Citizens House') which provides the main point of access and information for the Cabo Verdean diaspora.⁷ Its Action Plan 2017-2021 contains targets relating to improved communication, de-bureaucratisation, and coordination with diaspora groups.⁸
- 2008** ● **EU-Cabo Verde Mobility Partnership** enables greater circular migration to and from Cabo Verde. This agreement seeks to promote circular migration, and migration and development projects in Cabo Verde, as well as to provide easier conditions for citizens of Cabo Verde to travel, study, and do business in the EU.⁹ This mobility partnership has facilitated a number of key development projects such as the Diaspora For Development of Cape Verde (DIAS de Cabo Verde, see Spotlight section).
- 2014** ● **National Strategy on Emigration and Development (ENED).** The strategy aims at defining the objectives of the relationship with the diaspora; establishing a coherent framework for emigration and development; building a broader consensus on emigration policy; discussing the benefits of migration and development; and guiding the dialogue within the national public administration and with the donors.
- The axes of intervention of ENED are:
- facilitating and preparing departure;
 - supporting the integration of Cape Verdeans abroad;
 - gaining knowledge about diaspora and migration dynamics;
 - strengthening the links and dialogue with the diaspora;
 - facilitating and attracting remittances;
 - promoting Investment and international trade to the diaspora;
 - mobilizing the competencies of the diaspora.
- ENED was originally supposed to be valid for two years and form the basis of further policy development, but the status of this process is unclear.
- 2017** ● **Strategic Plan for Sustainable Development 2017 - 2021 (PEDS)** PEDS sets out plans for promoting Cabo Verde as a 'tourism platform'. The growth of the sector is a top development priority for the country.¹⁰
- 2020** ● **The Emigrant Investor Statute (EIS)** The EIS provides for special tax incentives for 'emigrant investors' beyond those already available to foreign investors. EIS sits under the Ministry of Finance, implemented together with the state agency for foreign investment promotion, Cabo Verde Trade Invest.¹¹

5 IOM, 'Estrategia Nacional de Emigração e Desenvolvimento' (2014).

6 English version available at: https://www.imf.org/~media/Websites/IMF/imported-full-text-pdf/external/pubs/ft/scr/2005/_cr05135.ashx

7 https://portondinosilhas.gov.cv/portonprd/porton.portoncv_v3?p=ACABBBADADC4C4C4

8 https://portondinosilhas.gov.cv/portonprd/porton.POR_DET_AREA_DB.open_file?p_doc_id=1838

9 https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_08_1720


10 <https://www.mignex.org/sites/default/files/2021-06/D053b-MBP-MIGNEX-policy-review-Cabo-Verde-v2-2021-06-18.pdf>

11 <https://cvtradeinvest.com/wp-content/uploads/bsk-pdf-manager/2020/05/Estatuto-do-Investidor-Emigrante.pdf>

2022 ● **Strategic Plan for Sustainable Development 2022 - 2026 (PEDS II)** proposes the “Cabo Verdean Diaspora - A Centrality” programme as part of the strategic schemes under the 4th Strategic Pillar (Sovereignty Pillar).¹² This programme consists of a series of measures aimed at strengthening national diaspora engagement efforts and positioning the diaspora as an integral component of national development frameworks. Proposed initiatives include the creation of diaspora statistics through a global mapping (Mapping the Cabo Verdean Diaspora, see Spotlight section), legislative reform to enable holistic diaspora participation, the promotion of seasonal emigration and protection of emigrants within the frameworks of the Rabat Process and the EU Mobility Partnership, and the promotion of Cabo Verdean culture and identity within diaspora communities.

2024 ● In 2024, Cape Verde reformed its **citizenship law** to allow descendants of Cape Verdeans born abroad to obtain citizenship by descent. This change enables children of Cape Verdean parents to receive citizenship automatically, while grandchildren and further descendants can apply without needing to reside in Cape Verde, hence strengthening insitutional ties with the diaspora.

Practices

Explore 520+ practices by country, SDG or sector of engagement in the [interactive database!](#) 

Diaspora Engagement Initiative

The Ministry of Finance of Cabo Verde (MoF) created the registry to strengthen diaspora’s ties and participation in policy development processes in Cabo Verde. The information gathered will enable the government of CV to understand better the geographic and demographic profile of diaspora and bring its member to participate in various forms to Cabo Verde’s Development. The DEI aims to build capacity and attract investment from the diaspora through an online database of diaspora members’ profiles alongside job, consultancy and volunteering opportunities in Cabo Verde

Diaspora voting abroad and diaspora representatives to the National Assembly

Cabo Verdeans living abroad have had the right to vote in presidential as well as legislative elections since 1992. A weighting system was implemented in order to avoid compromising national independence as more Cape Verdeans live abroad than in the national territory.¹³ There are six members of parliament to represent Cabo Verdean citizens abroad: two each from the Americas, the rest of Africa and Europe.¹⁴

Diaspora For Development of Cape Verde (DIAS de Cabo Verde)

Dias de Cabo Verde, initiated by the Cape Verdean Institute of Communities in partnership with the IOM and the EC, mobilised the human, social and professional resources of the country’s diaspora for capacity-building of key development sectors such as health, education, infrastructure and tourism. It has strengthened the ties between the diaspora and the public and private sectors in both Cabo Verde and Portugal, Italy, and the Netherlands. The project was funded by the European Commission and co-funded by the Portuguese Cooperation.

12 https://peds.gov.cv/caboverde4dev/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/PP03_CIP_4Pilar_Soberania.pdf

13 https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CMW/Shared%20Documents/CPV/INT_CMW_IFL_CPV_32149_E.pdf

14 <http://archive.ipu.org/parline-e/reports/2057.htm>

Casa do Cidadão

The Casa do Cidadão was established by the Cabo Verdean Government to provide a 'one-stop-shop' for the Cabo Verdean diaspora, via the online web-portal or physical Service Centres. In order to bring citizens closer together and ensure access by emigrant communities to Casa do Cidadão services, a COL - Online certificates counter - was created for the diaspora. A mobile customer service was launched to facilitate remote population's access to these services. Other services include: an integrated management system for documents; services related to citizenship, customs declarations, and tax; information on setting up business and investing in Cabo Verde; and tools to monitor the progress of children in education.

2022 Supporting Cabo Verde's Local and National Government Towards Sustainable and Inclusive Diaspora Engagement

Six years after the launch of Cabo Verde's first Diaspora Strategy Plan and in the context of the economic crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government of Cabo Verde is seeking to review its strategy to better engage with its diaspora and level-up the potential of their valuable contributions. The Government is seeking to attract investments and new business creation in innovative and promising sectors. In addition, the Government recognizes the need to include the particularities of each municipality in the updated strategy, whilst ensuring a coordinated approach across the different levels of governance. In this context, the project aims to contribute to sustainable and inclusive diaspora engagement for the development of Cabo Verde.

2022 Connecting blue economy actors: Generating employment, supporting livelihoods and mobilizing resources

aims at unleashing the potential of the Blue Economy in Cabo Verde as an accelerator of the Sustainable Development Goals and an engine of socio-economic inclusion for the poor coastal communities in the island of Santiago, Cabo Verde, especially women and youth. Its objectives are to increase the income of youth and women in the pilot coastal communities by improving their access to innovation, decent jobs, markets, services and finance; and to foster investments to finance blue economy income-generating projects, in particular impact and diaspora investments. Virtual and Physical Diaspora Investor Desks (tool to mobilized caboverdean diaspora resources to invest in the country) are operational at pilot Municipalities and key capeverdean diplomatic missions abroad.

Cabo Verde Investment Forum

Aims to drive FDI in part by encouraging diaspora investment. The 6th edition was held in Sal Island, in June 2024.

2020 Consular Webpage created under the initiative of Digital Diaspora

Provides the possibility for nationals abroad of getting online documents such as electronic passports and certifications and the registration of documents. This webpage turned the services to emigrants more efficient and effective.

Mapping the Cabo Verdean Diaspora 2024

Officially launched in 2024, Mapping the Cabo Verdean Diaspora is one of the initiatives under the “Cabo Verdean Diaspora - A Centrality” Programme and part of PEDS II. This initiative aims to establish socio-demographic and economic profiles as well as the geographical distribution of the Cabo Verdean diaspora in all host countries within the scope of the national statistical system. The National Institute of Statistics of Cabo Verde (INE) is in charge of developing and implementing the project, in cooperation with 25 host countries. The pilot survey and roundtable discussion were conducted during the second half of 2024, while the data collection took place between April and June 2025.¹⁵

Diaspora Investor’s Guide 2024

The Diaspora Investor’s Guide is an initiative of the Ministry of Communities of Cabo Verde and was developed by IOM, with funding from the IOM Development Fund within the project “Support for the Implementation of an Entrepreneurship Program for the Diaspora in Cabo Verde”. The Guide provides practical guidelines for current and prospective entrepreneurs seeking to start or expand a business. Although it is designed for both residents in Cabo Verde and those living abroad, it emphasises the critical role of diaspora investment in driving national economic growth.

EmpowerHer – Women’s Entrepreneurship in Cape Verde (D4D Grant)



Implemented by Avenir Écoles Cap-Vert (AECV) in partnership with the Institute of Employment and Vocational Training (IEFP), and supported by EUDiF through the Diaspora 4 Development (D4D) grants programme, the initiative focuses on supporting women and girls on the island of Santiago through entrepreneurship training, mentorship and business development support. The project combines capacity-building with diaspora knowledge transfer, engaging Cape Verdean diaspora entrepreneurs to share expertise and mentor participants.

Coop4Int – Strengthening Migrant Integration in Cabo Verde

The EU-funded “Coop4Int” project (2021–2025), implemented through the Migration Partnership Facility, focused on strengthening cooperation between Portugal and Cabo Verde to improve migrant integration and policy coordination. It also supported migrant entrepreneurship, training and the creation of local migration service units.

>> Observations

The “Observations” and “Obstacles” sections contain additional information on the context of diaspora engagement that does not fit directly into the other sections. They are based on a combination of literature review and comments from the authors. New information is incorporated during the annual updates. Readers are invited to verify the relevance of the information at the time of reading, as the context may have evolved.

¹⁵ <https://www.governo.cv/portugal-acolhe-ia-mesa-redonda-sobre-mapeamento-da-diaspora-cabo-verdiana-no-mundo/>

Migration has been an integral part of Cabo Verde's development strategy since 1975, even if only implicitly. Strong emotional and material bonds retained by Cabo Verdeans in the diaspora materialized as monetary and goods remittances. Cabo Verde has arguably made a lot of progress in the area of enabling conditions. However, in 2016, there was an institutional restructure following a change in government. Specialised diaspora agencies were subsumed by nonspecialised government bodies; for instance, the Ministry of Communities by Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Communities in 2016. The year 2016 also marked a shift in national policy. The main policy emphasis of the government since 2016 is encouraging diaspora investments, culminating in the new EIS (2020). Lack of knowledge about the diaspora may undermine effective policy design. Tourism is recognised as a key sector of growth for the economy. The diaspora is part of the government's vision for the sector, with measures for promoting what it refers to as 'ethnic tourism' – in other words tourism from the diaspora.

Given that most Cabo Verdeans live outside the country, either in the US or in Europe (principally in Portugal), developing effective diaspora engagement practices is a priority.



Achievements

Cabo Verde ranks high in Africa and globally in terms of democracy, governance, transparency, and human development.¹⁶ The government has sought to implement a number of reforms to strengthen the business and investment climate, including reforms to improve the efficiency of public administration to deliver services to citizens and businesses. The reforms, still incomplete, have been improving the business and investment climate for all investors – nationals, foreigners as well as diaspora.^{17,18}

Obstacles



- **Weak transport infrastructure:** Diaspora visitors and returnees overlook the inadequacies of health care, water, electricity and other services, but the low quality and inefficiencies of international and inter-island transportation generate a level of frustration that dampens diaspora enthusiasm for the homeland.
- **Bureaucratic barriers:** Even though institutions generally work, favouritism, judicial delays, and bureaucratic inefficiencies are common. A common diaspora complaint is long customs delays which act as a barrier to people sending goods back to Cabo Verde.
- **Funding:** Lack of funds impede the government in implementing a sound diaspora engagement strategy and providing adequate services to their diaspora. The services provided remain limited even though they have improved.

16 <https://intpolicydigest.org/2019/07/27/cape-verde-continues-its-reforms-with-the-economy-showing-promise/>

17 Santos (2015a), 'Cape Verde: Rethinking Diaspora in Development Policy' in *International Migration* 54(2)

18 For an overview of the development of diaspora initiatives in Cabo Verde, see: <https://www.rabat-process.org/images/RabatProcess/Documents/infographic-cabo-verde-road-to-migration-data-policy-portuguese.pdf>

Annex: List of Actors

Explore the institutionalisation of diaspora engagement worldwide via the [typology of 520+ institutions](#)



Diaspora related institutions

- **At regional level**

African Union Citizens and Diaspora Directorate (AU CIDO)

Cabo Verde is a member of the African Union and nominates a diaspora focal point to represent Cabo Verde as part of the AU CIDO Continental Meetings.

Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)

- **National institutions**
 - At ministerial level

Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Communities

The Ministry of Communities was created in 2011 as a successor to the Institute of Communities (IC; created on September 3, 2001). The Ministry of Communities was absorbed into the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Communities in 2016 and is the lead ministry for diaspora engagement.

- At sub-ministerial level

Casa do Cidadão

This was established by the Cabo Verdean Government to provide a 'one-stop-shop' for the Cabo Verdean diaspora, using either the online web-portal (<https://portondinosilhas.gov.cv>) or Service Centres of Casa do Cidadão in Sal, Praia and São Vicente.

Observatório das Migrações

The observatory was established in 2014 to collect and analyse migration data relevant to the country.

Diaspora organisations in Europe

There are tens of Cape Verdean diaspora organisations in Europe, but these tend to be small community organisations or diaspora professional associations and most do not have websites. While many will implement small-scale and episodic development interventions in Cabo Verde, it has not been possible to assess their activities in this regard. For a directory of these diaspora organisations, please visit: <http://www.caboverde-info.com/Sociedade/Diaspora/Associacoes-Cabo-Verdianas>

Read more about diaspora organisations in [“Starting guide: What is a diaspora organisation”](#)



Associação Cabo-verdiana de Lisboa Portugal 1970

Development activities

One of the oldest Cabo Verdean diaspora organisations in Portugal, founded in 1970, Associação Cabo-verdiana de Lisboa provides cultural and educational activities including promoting bi-lingual literacy in Creole and Portuguese, in particular for 2nd and 3rd generation diaspora young people, and works to promote ‘dual citizenship, culture and identity’.¹⁹ It also delivers educational and health promotion projects in Cabo Verde.

Association CHEDA - Crianças de hoje e de Amanha France

Development activities

For more than 25 years, the association Crianças de Hoje e de Amanha (CHEDA) has been developing cultural exchanges between Cape Verdean and French children, providing aid to Cape Verdean children and promoting Cape Verdean culture through various actions and projects.

Associação Girassol Solidario Portugal

Development activities

The association works to provide humanitarian, psychosocial and intercultural mediation support to patients evacuated from Cape Verde who are in Portugal for treatment.

Associazione delle Donne Capoverdiane in Italia - O.M.C.V.I

Integration activities

Associazione delle Donne Capoverdiane in Italia - O.M.C.V.I founded in 1988 is the oldest association of immigrants still active in Rome. OMCVI aims to promote the integration of Cape Verdeans in Italy, with a special focus on women, and contributes to sustainable development in Cape Verde.

Associazione di volontariato Kariba

Development & Integration activities

Kariba is a non-governmental association based in Trento Province, which aims to promote social justice, sustainable development and community empowerment. Working at the national and local levels in Africa and Italy, it seeks to encourage an active role of the diaspora in developing its country of origin, integrating new migrants/refugees in Italy, and promoting global education in the local community in Italy.

¹⁹ <http://www.faapa.info/blog/associacao-cabo-verdiana-de-lisboa-comemora-dia-internacional-da-mulher-com-mesa-redonda-e-atividades-culturais/>

Avenir Ecole Cap-Vert

Avenir Écoles Cap-Vert (AECV) is composed of members from the Cape Verdean diaspora living in France. Its activities focus on supporting Cape Verdean communities through education, economic empowerment and sustainable development projects.

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