Promoting sustainable development in tropical islands: strengthening capacities for enhancing cultural heritage, traditional know-how, and local food production

Cultivar

TERRITORIAL DIAGNOSIS

Cultural heritage, traditional know-how and local food production: paths and good practices for sustainable development in Cabo Verde and São Tomé e Príncipe

ISBN: 978-972-778-487-5

coordinator

UNIVERSIDADE DE ÉVORA

partners

UNISS UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI SASSARI

unimed

USTP

UNIVERSIDADE CABO VERDE

ISCEE

UniPiaget de Cabo Verde

DGC

associated partner

CULTIVAR Project n. 101179293

Co-funded by the European Union

About CULTIVAR

The CULTIVAR project aims at leveraging cultural heritage and traditional knowledge, fostering sustainable tourism and local food promotion in Cabo Verde and São Tomé e Príncipe by establishing an innovative teaching environment and fostering cooperation between academia and society. Through a multidisciplinary approach, which entails teachers' training, curricula update, workshops and focus groups with local stakeholders and the development of cultural projects, CULTIVAR contributes to a new generation of specialists capable of addressing the unique needs of the two African archipelagos.

Full partners

- University of Évora
- University of Sassari
- UNIMED – Mediterranean Universities Union
- University of São Tomé e Príncipe
- University of Cabo Verde
- ISCEE – Instituto Superior de Ciências Económicas e Empresariais
- Jean Piaget University of Cabo Verde

More at: https://www.cultivarproject.eu/

Co-funded by the European Union

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.

Document information

Project Title	CULTIVAR - Promoting sustainable development in tropical islands: strengthening capacities for enhancing cultural heritage, traditional know-how, and local food production
Project Number	101179293
Work Package	WP2 - Curriculum Evaluation and Heritage Mapping
Deliverable	2.2 - Report "Cultural heritage, traditional know-how and local food production: paths and good practices for sustainable development in Cabo Verde and São Tomé e Príncipe"
Delivery date	31/07/2025
Dissemination level	Public
Author(s)	Sónia Bombico (UEVORA, Portugal) Keitty de Oliveira Silva (UEVORA, Portugal) Vladimir Silves Ferreira (Uni-CV, Cabo Verde) Dominika Swolkien (Uni-CV, Cabo Verde)
Contributors	Maria Dulcelina Tavares da Paz (UEVORA, Portugal) Ana Carvalho (UEVORA, Portugal) Monica Brito (UEVORA, Portugal) Rute Matos (UEVORA, Portugal) Maria Raquel Lucas (UEVORA, Portugal) Sara Marques Pereira (UEVORA, Pólo São Tomé e Príncipe) Renata Marques (UEVORA, Pólo São Tomé e Príncipe) Miguel Elias (UEVORA, Portugal) Ana Cristina Agulheiro Santos (UEVORA, Portugal) Silvia Serreli (UNISS, Italy) Gloria Pungetti (UNISS, Italy) Nathalie Clauter (UNIMED, Italy) Euridice Helga Aguiar (USTP, São Tomé e Príncipe) Raquel Moreno (USTP, São Tomé e Príncipe) Miclay Carvalho (USTP, São Tomé e Príncipe) Natália Umbelina (USTP, São Tomé e Príncipe) Nazaré Ceita (USTP, São Tomé e Príncipe)

	Eugénio Neves (USTP, São Tomé e Príncipe) Cicley do Sacramento (USTP, São Tomé e Príncipe) Dossaví dos Santos (USTP, São Tomé e Príncipe) Lourenço Gomes (Uni-CV) António Gomes (Uni-CV) Elyane Dias (Uni-CV) José Lopes (ISCEE, Cabo Verde) Sahida-Alina do Rosário (ISCEE, Cabo Verde) José Manuel de Barros (ISCEE, Cabo Verde) Zeuga Semedo (ISCEE, Cabo Verde) Nadir Almeida (ISCEE, Cabo Verde) Américo Lopes (ISCEE, Cabo Verde) Włodzimierz Józef Szymaniak (UniPiaget, Cabo Verde) Inês Alves (UniPiaget, Cabo Verde) Gertrudes Oliveira (UniPiaget, Cabo Verde) José Carlos Gonçalves (UniPiaget, Cabo Verde) Maria Lara Ferrero Gomez (UniPiaget, Cabo Verde)
ISBN	978-972-778-487-5
Abstract (for dissemination)	This report presents a territorial diagnosis of Cabo Verde and São Tomé e Príncipe, focusing on the sectors relevant to the CULTIVAR project — including cultural heritage, natural heritage, tourism, and local food products. Drawing on desk research, literature review, field missions, and unstructured interviews with key stakeholders, the report applies SWOT analysis as a central tool to evaluate the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats shaping the development potential of both archipelagos.

Review History

Version	Name/Partner	Date	Summary of changes
V1	Uni-CV and UEVORA	24/07/2025	First draft version
V2	Uni-CV and UEVORA	31/07/2025	Version with input from all partners

Note on the use of Artificial Intelligence: *This report was written by the authors and supported by AI-based tools — specifically DeepL and ChatGPT — which were used exclusively for translation into English and linguistic editing. All content was subsequently reviewed by members of the project's human team.*

List of Abbreviations

ADPM - Associação de Defesa do Património de Mértola
AECID - Spanish International Cooperation Agency for Development
AGAC - Association of Large Freezing Tuna Vessels
ALUPEC - Alfabeto Unificado para a Escrita do Cabo-verdiano
AR - Augmented Reality
ARM - Agricultural Risk Management
BBNJ - Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction
BECI – Bases Experimentais de Culturas Industriais
BECAF - Bases Experimentais de Culturas Alimentares Frutícolas
CACAU - House of Arts, Creation, Environment and Utopias
CADR - Rural Development Support Centre
CAGR - Compound Annual Growth Rate
CBD - Convention on Biological Diversity
CCM - Centro Cultural do Mindelo
CECAB - Cooperative for Organic Cocoa Production and Export
CECAFEB - Organic Coffee Export Cooperative
CECAQ11 - Cooperative for the Export of Quality Cocoa 11
CGIAR - Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research
CIAT - Agronomic and Technological Research Centre
CNAD - National Centre for Art, Handicrafts and Design
CELFF - Centro de Estudos, Línguas e Formação do Funchal
CNP - National Fisheries Council
CONCHA - The Construction of Early Modern Global Cities and Oceanic Networks in the Atlantic
CPLP - Community of Portuguese Language Countries
CV – Cabo Verde
CVEs - Common Vulnerabilities and Exposures
DAPB - Directorate of Protected Areas and Biodiversity
DGC - Directorate-General for Culture
DHTH - Directorate-General for Tourism and Hospitality
DRBPNP - Department of the Biosphere Reserve and Príncipe Natural Park
EBA - Endemic Bird Area
EbA - Ecosystem-Based Adaptation
ECOFAC - Ecosystemes Forestiers d'Afrique Centrale
EHTCV - Cabo Verde School of Hospitality and Tourism
ENSAN - National Strategy for Food and Nutritional Security
ERIS - Independent Health Regulatory Authority
ENEP - National Strategy for the Eradication of Extreme Poverty

ESS6 - Environmental and Social Standard 6
EU - European Union
FAO – Food and Agriculture Organization
FLR - Forest Landscape Restoration
FSCPP - Food Security Crisis Preparedness Plan
GI – Geographical Indication
GIAHS - Globally Important Agricultural Heritage System
GDP - Gross Domestic Product
GOPEDS-Tourism - Grand Strategic Plan Options for Sustainable Tourism Development
HBD - Here Be Dragons
HDI - Human Development Index
HEIs - Higher Education Institutions
IMF – International Monetary Fund
IMVP - Instituto Marquês de Valle Flôr
INE – National Institute of Statistics
INSTO - International Network of Sustainable Tourism Observatories
IP – Instituto Público
IPC - Instituto do Património Cultural
IRR - Internal Rate of Return
ISCEE - Instituto Superior de Ciências Económicas e Empresariais
ITCV - Instituto do Turismo de Cabo Verde
IUCN - International Union for Conservation of Nature
IUU - Illegal, unreported, and unregulated
MAPDR - Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Rural Development
MARAPA - Mar, Ambiente e Pesca Artesanal
MPAs - Marine Protected Areas
NbS - Nature-Based Solutions
NBSAP - National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
NGO - Nongovernmental Organizations
OECD – Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OTISCEE - Tourism Observatory of ISCEE
PAFAE - Support Project for Export Agricultural Value Chains
PARM - Partnership for Agricultural Risk Management
PDO - Protected Designations of Origin
PEDS - Strategic Plan for Sustainable Development
PE-SNIA - Strategic Plan for Agricultural Research
PGI - Protected Geographical Indication
POT - Operational Tourism Programme
PNASE - National School Feeding and Health Programme
PNASS - National Action Plan for Sanitary Safety
PNOST - Obô Natural Park of São Tomé

PNP - Príncipe Natural Park
POPs - Persistent Organic Pollutants
PPP - Purchasing Power Parity
PRRA - Programme for Requalification, Rehabilitation and Accessibility
SDG - Sustainable Development Goal
SESA - Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment
SIDS - Small Island Developing State
SMEs - Small and Medium Enterprises
SST - Seleção de São Tomé
STP – São Tomé e Príncipe
SUCLA - Sociedade Ultramarina de Conservas, Lda.
SWOT - Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats
TACV - Transportes Aéreos de Cabo Verde
TEK - Traditional Ecological Knowledge
UCH - Underwater Cultural Heritage
UEVORA – University of Évora
UNCCD - UN Convention to Combat Desertification
UNDP - United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO - United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
Uni-CV - University of Cabo Verde
UniPiaget - Jean Piaget University of Cabo Verde
UNIMED – Mediterranean Universities Union
UNISS - University of Sassari
UNWTO - United Nations World Tourism Organization
USA – The United States of America
USTP - University of São Tomé e Príncipe WP – Work Package
VR - Virtual Reality
WHO - World Health Organization
WTTC - World Travel & Tourism Council

INDEX

CULTIVAR Project n. 101179293

Co-funded by the European Union

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Context of the CULTIVAR Project

The CULTIVAR project is tailored for sustainable development in tropical regions, specifically targeting Cabo Verde and São Tomé e Príncipe. It aims to leverage cultural heritage and traditional knowledge, fostering sustainable tourism and local food promotion. Despite abundant natural and cultural riches in both countries, their intangible cultural heritage and gastronomy remain undervalued and underutilized sustainably.

The project pioneers an interdisciplinary higher education system, training professionals to tackle challenges and meet Sustainable Development Goals. Proposed activities include fortifying Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in critical areas like History/Cultural Heritage, Tourism, Agronomy, and Social Sciences. It entails conducting training seminars for teachers, updating curricula, and creating modules based on Education for Sustainability principles.

CULTIVAR aims to raise awareness in civil societies and among decision-makers, fostering positive synergies between academia and society.

To achieve this, the project will conduct training workshops and focus groups for teachers, researchers, postgraduate students, and external professionals, emphasizing the development and implementation of cultural projects.

The overarching goal is to establish an innovative teaching environment addressing cultural heritage. Adopting a multidisciplinary approach, CULTIVAR seeks to cultivate cooperation between HEIs, scientific communities, and stakeholders, contributing to a new generation of specialists capable of addressing the Partner Countries' unique needs.

Key objectives

1. Improve the quality of HE and enhance its relevance for the labour market and society, through training workshops, focus groups and science communication and knowledge transfer actions for stakeholders and the public.
2. Improve the level of competences, skills and employability potential of students in HEIs by developing new, relevant, and innovative courses in the field of cultural heritage and education for sustainability.

3. Improve the training of teachers and continuous professional development to impact the longer-term quality of the education system, by promoting teacher training seminars in Europe.
4. Stimulate cooperation of institutions, capacity building and exchange of good practice, by organising co-creation workshops for interdisciplinary cultural projects.
5. Foster cooperation across different regions of the world through joint initiatives, developing activities and dividing responsibilities between HEIs in third countries and HEIs in Europe.

The fundamental aim of the project is to foster a unique and ground-breaking teaching environment addressing cultural heritage and traditional know-how by combining a multidisciplinary approach to encouraging sustainable tourism and the promotion of local food products in the two partner countries – Cabo Verde and São Tomé e Príncipe – through cooperation between HEIs, scientific communities, and other stakeholders including policy makers and local communities
The project also aims to foster international cooperation among all partners for future initiatives and to establish a global, multi-stakeholder collaborative and educational network focused on Cultural Heritage and sustainable development.
This is supported by a comprehensive quality management approach, implemented through project structures, regular meetings, and daily management activities.

1.2. Task 2.2: Objectives and Methodology

This report is based on the principles and methodologies applied in **territorial diagnosis** studies, ensuring a **comprehensive and structured assessment of São Tomé e Príncipe and Cabo Verde territories**.
A territorial diagnosis is a strategic tool used to assess and analyse a given territory by identifying its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats across multiple sectors. In the specific case of this report, we will apply the **SWOT analysis** as a key methodology to structure the evaluation. This approach centres on economic, social, and ecological factors, considering the interplay of

different stakeholders, including local communities, government institutions, businesses, and civil society organizations.

This report presents a diagnosis for São Tomé e Príncipe and Cabo Verde, with a specific focus on the topics of the CULTIVAR project. The aim is to **evaluate the current situation**, **highlight key issues**, and **analyse sustainable development strategies** that can contribute to the economic and social resilience of these island nations.

The adopted **methodology** follows a structured approach comprising **description**, **analysis**, **and conclusions, applied to the following areas**: **cultural heritage**, **natural heritage**, **tourism**, and **local food products**. This report not intended to be a systematic survey; rather, it focuses on the analysis of a representative sample, highlighting key issues, entities, initiatives, projects, and best practices.

To support this analysis, a **literature review and desk research** were conducted to gather contextual data. Complementing this, technical **visits and unstructured interviews were carried out with key stakeholders** — including public bodies, memory institutions, such as museums and cultural organizations, policymakers, associations, tourism operators, private companies, and local producers — to deepen understanding of local dynamics. This process was reinforced by a **one-week field mission conducted in each country** with the participation of the European teams, aimed at fostering direct engagement with the local context and presenting the project to relevant stakeholders. Additionally, **a stakeholder map** was developed, encompassing higher education institutions and academic actors, memory institutions, public agencies (such as ministries and national institutes), foundations, NGOs, associations, private sector representatives, and media organizations (Appendix A).

By applying this methodology, the report seeks to:

- Identify and document the territory's resources, including natural and cultural heritage.
- Analyse challenges and constraints, such as infrastructure limitations, environmental risks, demographic trends, and governance issues.
- Engage multiple stakeholders in the diagnostic process, ensuring that the perspectives of local communities, policymakers, and economic actors are considered.

- Recognize recommendations for integrated and sustainable territorial development, supporting inclusive economic growth, environmental conservation, and cultural preservation.

The territorial diagnosis is not merely a static assessment but serves as a concrete **starting point for the project**, **guiding future actions** through a roadmap for medium- and long-term development strategies, implemented in a coordinated and participatory manner. The **findings in this report will serve as a basis for decision-making related to the development of activities under Work Package 4** (WP4) of the CULTIVAR project, which aims to support the **development of cultural initiatives**. The objectives of WP4 include:

- Building expertise in designing and planning cultural projects.
- Developing proficiency in organizing focus groups as a qualitative research technique.
- Emphasizing multidisciplinary training to cultivate professionals with an interdisciplinary profile.
- Strengthening connections between Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and local stakeholders, while increasing local community involvement by linking government entities, local authorities, heritage institutions, the private sector, and civil society organizations to promote sustainable development.

- Facilitating networking and cooperation among stakeholders to support the valorization of cultural heritage, sustainable tourism, and local food products.

Meeting with the Rector of the University of São Tomé e Príncipe
Photo: Cultivar Project, 2025

Technical visit to the Museum of the Sea and Traditional Fishing
Photo: Cultivar Project, 2025

1.2.1. Field Work

Two fieldwork missions were carried out, **one in each archipelago**. The visit to São Tomé e Príncipe included fieldwork exclusively on the island of São Tomé, while Cabo Verde mission involved visits to the islands of Santiago and São Vicente. Each mission included seven members from the European teams: four from UEVORA, two from UNISS, and one from UNIMED, who were joined by several members of the local teams.

As previously described, the missions aimed at fostering direct engagement with the local context and introducing the project to relevant stakeholders, while also conducting technical visits, informal conversations, and unstructured interviews with key stakeholders — including public institutions, memory organisations (such as museums and cultural bodies), policymakers, associations, tourism operators, private companies, and local producers — in order to deepen the understanding of local dynamics.

The mission to **São Tomé e Príncipe took place from 10 to 14 March 2025** and involved the following activities:

- Meeting with the team from the University of São Tomé e Príncipe, a project partner;
- Official audience with the Minister of Education, Culture, Science and Higher Education;
- Meeting with the Directorate-General for Culture, an associated project partner;
- Visits to the Historical Archive and the National Library;
- Meeting with the Directorate-General for Tourism and Hospitality;
- Technical visit to CIAT – Agronomic and Technological Research Centre;
- Visit to the Cooperative for Organic Cocoa Production and Export (CECAB);
- Field visits to the Roças of Monte Forte, Diogo Vaz, and Agostinho Neto;

Meeting with the director of CIAT (Agronomic and Technological Research Centre). Photo: Cultivar Project, 2025

Meeting with the Directorate-General for Tourism and Hospitality Photo: Cultivar Project, 2025

CULTIVAR Project n. 101179293
Co-funded by the European Union

- Visits to the Coffee Museum (Monte Café Roça), the Museum of the Sea and Traditional Fishing (Morro Peixe), and the Almada Negreiros House Museum;
- Meeting with the team from CACAU (House of Arts, Creation, Environment and Utopias);
- Exploration of the Bobo Forro Market;
- Discussion with the team from PAFAE (Support Project for Export Agricultural Value Chains), funded by the European Union and Camões – Portuguese Cooperation, and implemented by the Marquês de Valle Flôr Institute;
- Technical visit to the National Museum.

The fieldwork in **Cabo Verde was conducted from 31 March to 4 April 2025** and comprised the following activities:Project launch event hosted by UniPiaget on 31 March;

Cultivar Team in visit to the University Jean Piaget de Cabo Verde
Photo: Cultivar Project, 2025

- Meeting with partner teams from the University of Cabo Verde, ISCEE, and UniPiaget, including guided tours of partner facilities;
- Visits to the Ildo Lobo Palace of Culture and the Amílcar Cabral Foundation/Museum;
- Excursion to the interior of Santiago Island, including the National Botanical Garden and the Serra da Malagueta Natural Park;
- Visit to the Tarrafal Concentration Camp Museum;

- Observation of traditional fishing activities at Porto Mosquito;
- Technical visit to Cidade Velha – Historic Centre of Ribeira Grande, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and the São Filipe Fortress;
- Meeting with the executive team of the Ribeira Grande de Santiago Municipal Council;
- Guided walk through the historic centre of Mindelo (São Vicente), including the Museum of the Sea (Replica of the Belém Tower), the Municipal Market, and the Fish Market;
- Visits to the headquarters of ISCEE and the Mindelo campuses of Uni-CV and UniPiaget;
- Meeting with Aventura Incoming Agency, a local tourism operator;
- Visit to the Luís Batista Workshop, producers of traditional musical instruments;
- Meeting with Mariventos, organisers of the Kavala Fresk Feastival;
- Meetings and visits with the directors of the Mindelo Cultural Centre and the CNAD (National Centre for Art, Handicrafts and Design).

Tarrafal Concentration Camp Museum, in Santiago Island, Cabo Verde
Photo: Cultivar Project, 2025

Meeting with Mariventos, organisers of the Kavala Fresk Feastival
Photo: Cultivar Project, 2025

São Tomé e Príncipe

Príncipe

São Tomé

CULTIVAR Project n. 101179293
Co-funded by the European Union

2. SÃO TOMÉ E PRÍNCIPE

2.1. Geographical Location and Historical Overview

São Tomé e Príncipe is a **Small Island Developing State** (SIDS) **located in the Gulf of Guinea, circa 300 km of the west-central coast of Africa**. Comprising **two main volcanic islands**, **São Tomé** e **Príncipe**, the archipelago is estimated to be around 3 million years old and is part of the Cameroon Volcanic Line (Neto and Henriques, 2023). The islands are geologically distinct, likely never having been connected to the African mainland, and were unaffected by Pleistocene glaciation events. This isolation has led to the evolution of a **highly unique and endemic biodiversity** (República Democrática de São Tomé e Príncipe, 2021a). The country has a **tropical humid climate** with two distinct seasons: a nine-month rainy season from September to June and a relatively dry period, known as "Gravana", from June to September. Average annual temperatures range around 26°C in the mountainous regions, with relative humidity averaging 75% (República Democrática de São Tomé e Príncipe, 2021a). The islands are ecologically rich, featuring rainforests, mangroves, and cloud forests that support a remarkable number of endemic terrestrial species—including 9 amphibians and 21 reptiles, of which 17 are unique to the archipelago—as well as diverse marine ecosystems like coral reefs and seagrass beds, home to over 2,000 recorded macroinvertebrate species (Ceríaco *et al.*, 2023; Bento *et al.*, 2023). Key conservation areas include the Parque Natural Obô de São Tomé and Parque Nacional do Príncipe, which also serve as the sources of the islands' main river systems (República

Boca do Inferno, São Tomé Island
Photo: Cultivar Project, 2025

Democrática de São Tomé e Príncipe, 2021a).

The islands are **highly vulnerable to climate change**, particularly to rising sea levels and shifts in rainfall, which threaten freshwater availability, agriculture, and biodiversity (Chou *et al.*, 2020). Freshwater resources are limited to a network of rivers, including the Papagaio River, vital for the capital Santo António on Príncipe (República Democrática de São Tomé e Príncipe, 2021a).

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">República Democrática de São Tomé e Príncipe</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Location: Gulf of Guinea (Western Africa)
Total Land Area: 1001km2
Coastline: 209km
Climate: Equatorial
Average annual temperatures: 22 °C to 31 °C
Rainfall: annual average of approximately 3200 mm
Capital: São Tomé
Estimated population: 240,630 inhabitants (Worldometer, 2025)
Population density: 250 inhabitants per km2 ((Worldometer, 2025)</td></tr>
<tr><td>São Tomé Island:
Location: Latitude: 0.3352 - Longitude: 6.7308
Land Area: 857km2
Highest point: 2024m (Pico do Cão Grande)
Capital: São Tomé</td><td>Príncipe Island:
Location: Latitude: 1.61269 - Longitude: 7.39754
Land Area: 142km2
Highest point: 948m (Pico do Príncipe)
Capital: Santo António</td></tr>
</table>

Historically, **São Tomé was discovered by Portuguese navigators in 1470 and Príncipe in 1471**. The islands became **centres of sugarcane production using enslaved African labour** starting in 1493. São Tomé was made a captaincy in 1485, and Príncipe was granted to António Carneiro in 1500. **Over centuries, economic focus shifted from sugar to coffee and cocoa, shaping the islands' landscapes and demography.** Three main phases were recorded, known as: the sugarcane cycle, beginning in the late 15th century; the coffee cycle, starting in the second half of the 18th century; and the cocoa cycle, during the 19th century. São Tomé e Príncipe also played a strategic role in the Portuguese transatlantic trade network linking Europe, Africa, and Brazil (Alarcão *et al.*, 2009; Henriques and Carvalho, 2019).

Cultural influences in São Tomé e Príncipe reflect a complex colonial legacy shaped by forced labour, migration, and social stratification. The population historically included *forros* (freed slaves' descendants), *serviçais*, *angolares*, and *tongas*, forming a diverse but segmented society. Unlike Cabo Verde,

nowadays creole identity plays a lesser role; Portuguese remains dominant, and national identity is more rooted in African heritage and colonial resistance. The plantation system further shaped cultural practices, linguistic and social dynamics, leaving a lasting impact on the islands' identity (Seibert, 2014).

Following **independence from Portugal on 12 July 1975**, São Tomé e Príncipe experienced a single-party political system until the adoption of a **new constitution in 1990**, which established a multi-party democracy. The country began opening its economy in the mid-1980s, marking the start of broader political and economic reforms, **despite continued political instability**.

Culturally, São Tomé e Príncipe is a mosaic shaped by centuries of Portuguese colonial influence blended with African heritage and traditions. National identity in São Tomé e Príncipe is expressed through the use of Portuguese as the official language, alongside several local Creole languages (called 'dialects' locally) such as Forro, Angolar, and Lung'Ie. Cabo Verdean Creole is also spoken, as well as some Angolan bantu languages, reflecting the presence of descendants of migrant workers who arrived during the colonial period. This linguistic diversity is complemented by vibrant musical styles like ússua and socopé, Afro-Portuguese cuisine, and traditional festivities, all of which contribute to the country's rich cultural heritage. Religious practice, predominantly Catholic with elements of syncretism, also reflects this cultural fusion. Despite their colonial past, São-Toméans have cultivated a strong sense of pride and resilience, building a **national identity that celebrates diversity, autonomy, and a deep connection to the land and sea**.

STP's Islets
Ilhéu das Cabras
Ilhéu das Rolas
Ilhéu Bom Bom
Ilhéu Boné de Jóquei
Ilhéu de Santana
Ilhéu Catarino
Ilhéu Quixibá
Ilhéu Sete Pedras
Ilhéu Jalé
Ilhéu dos Côcos
Ilhéu Tinhosa Grande
Ilhéu Tinhosa Pequena

2.2. Social Environment and Economy

São Tomé e Príncipe has a **small and fragile economy that depends heavily on foreign aid, tourism, and agricultural exports.**

Since **97% of public investment is financed through debt and foreign aid**, São Tomé e Príncipe faces persistent and interconnected development challenges, typical of Small Island Developing States (SIDS). **The country's productive sector mainly relies on palm oil, cocoa, and tourism**. Agriculture, including subsistence farming, accounts for 70% of rural employment. The **private sector is small and fragile**, mainly composed of informal businesses and

Main Rivers in São Tomé
River Abade
River Cantador
River Contador
River Ió Grande
River Lembá
River Manuel Jorge
River Quija
River Xufexufe
River do Ouro
Main Rivers in Príncipe
River Papagaio
River Bibi
River Banzú

microenterprises, with few medium-sized formal companies. Economic growth has not led to significant improvements in living conditions and poverty reduction, particularly among

In 2023, the country's nominal GDP was estimated at approximately US$ 678.98 million (WorldData, 2024). Real GDP growth stood at just 0.5%, reflecting structural challenges and external shocks. However, the International Monetary Fund projects economic growth to reach around 3.1% by 2025, driven by economic reforms and investments financed by international donors (IMF, 2024).

Inflation, which peaked at 21.3% in 2023, dropped to around 14.4% in 2024 and further declined to approximately 10% by March 2025, according to estimates from the World Bank (World Bank, 2025). The unemployment rate has remained relatively stable, estimated between 9% and 10% in recent years. Youth unemployment appears slightly lower, with World Bank and ILO data suggesting a youth unemployment rate of approximately 4.9% in 2024 (World Bank WDI, 2024).

Emigration is a significant demographic feature of São Tomé e Príncipe. According to a recent World Bank policy review, **around 20% of the national population**—approximately 40,000 Santomeans—**live abroad**, with Portugal accounting for nearly half of this diaspora. Emigration rates have increased notably since the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly among young adults seeking better economic opportunities. However, the economic returns of emigration remain modest: remittance inflows were valued at roughly US$ 9 million in 2021, equivalent to about 1.7% of national GDP (UNCDF and World Bank, 2025; World Bank Blogs, 2024).

In terms of human development, São Tomé e Príncipe holds a Human Development Index (HDI) score of 0.637, placing the country in the **medium human development category**. This indicator reflects **ongoing challenges in health, education, and income distribution** (UNDP, 2024).

Poverty remains widespread. According to the World Bank, 45% of the population live on less than $3.65 per day (2017 PPP). In 2022, 9% of the population fell below the international poverty line of $2.15/day, while 10.2% lived under $3.00/day (2021 PPP; World Bank, 2024). Income inequality is also relatively high, with a Gini index of approximately 40.7.

Despite some improvements in life expectancy—now averaging around 73 years—and steady public investment in infrastructure and education, **São Tomé e Príncipe continues to face major socio-economic vulnerabilities**. These include limited job creation, underemployment, and a growing dependence on foreign aid and imports. The country's development prospects will likely depend on deepening economic diversification, strengthening human capital, and more effective engagement with its diaspora.

In December 2024, São Tomé e Príncipe officially left the category of Least Developed Countries.

In light of these socio-economic challenges, São Tomé e Príncipe has adopted the 2030 Agenda, aligning with global efforts to address poverty, promote sustainable development, and ensure social equity. **The country has chosen seven Sustainable Development Goals as the foundation for its development policies and strategies**: eradicating poverty (**SDG 1**), decent work and economic growth (**SDG 8**), industry, innovation, and infrastructure (**SDG 9**), climate action (**SDG 13**), life below water (**SDG 14**), life on land (**SDG 15**), and peace, justice, and strong institutions (**SDG 16**). However, despite some actions aimed at national ownership of the SDGs, further efforts are needed to enhance the involvement of development actors and the general population. Additionally, although there is alignment between planning instruments and the SDGs, a thorough analysis of their coherence and degree of alignment is lacking, using appropriate methodologies. There was also no initial prioritization of SDG targets, nor the establishment of a national indicator framework based on global indicators, making it difficult to assess progress according to national priorities. Another **weakness in the SDG implementation in São Tomé e Príncipe is the absence of an institutional governance mechanism to coordinate, monitor, and evaluate the**

Women washing clothes in a river, São Tomé Island
Photo: Cultivar Project, 2025

CULTIVAR Project n. 101179293
Co-funded by the European Union

process. This gap is expected to be addressed in the short term as part of efforts to improve and accelerate SDG implementation in the country (Voluntary National Review: STP, 2022).

2.3. Cultural Heritage

DESCRIPTION__

The uniqueness of São Tomé is deeply embedded in its cultural landscapes and historical land use

São Tomé e Príncipe is unique due to its tropical biodiversity and its cultural landscapes shaped by centuries of agricultural history. A **key feature of the island's uniqueness is the roças**, historical cacao, coffee, and copra plantations that once dominated the economy and continue to influence the cultural and social identity. These plantations **are not only agricultural sites but also cultural and historical landmarks**, reflecting the island's colonial past and the legacy of indigenous and African populations.

The **roças played a central role in São Tomé's economy in the 19th and early 20th centuries, when it was one of the world's largest cacao producers**. However, after the First World War, cocoa production gradually began to decline.

These **agricultural complexes were designed to be self-sufficient**, housing both enslaved and free workers, and included healthcare facilities (hospitals and maternity wards), schools, workshops, warehouses, and food production units (Pape, 2016).

The roças are integral to the cultural landscape of São Tomé e Príncipe, shaped by a blend of African, Portuguese, and tropical influences. **They reflect the luso-afro-tropical heritage that defines the island's cultural identity** (Fernandes *et al.*, 2011). These plantations were places where African slave populations and Portuguese settlers interacted, creating new social structures (Seibert, 2016).

Roça Monte Forte, São Tomé Island
Photo: Wlodzimierz Józef Szymaniak, Cultivar Project, 2025

Despite their decline after São Tomé e Príncipe's independence in 1975, the roças still hold potential for revitalization through community tourism and sustainable development. The roças offer opportunities for economic and cultural valorization. By combining ecotourism with heritage preservation, the roças can generate economic benefits for local communities while maintaining their cultural legacy. They symbolize the island's colonial history, cultural blending, and ongoing struggle for identity. Revitalizing these spaces can both honor São Tomé's heritage and offer sustainable opportunities for the future.

Notwithstanding the limited resources of public institutions, the country remains committed to protecting and promoting its national cultural heritage

São Tomé e Príncipe's national heritage is governed by **Law No. 4/2003 – the National Historical and Cultural Heritage Law** – which defines the concepts of cultural, documentary, artistic, and linguistic heritage, as well as tangible, intangible, and movable heritage.

São Tomé's Historical Archive, São Tomé Island
Photo: Cultivar Project, 2025

The Directorate-General for Culture (**DGC - São Tomé e Príncipe**), subordinated to the Ministry of Education, Culture, Science and Higher Education, **is the main body responsible for coordinating and implementing national cultural policies**. Its responsibilities include managing museums, organizing cultural events, promoting heritage education, and supporting artistic projects. It also organizes activities such as cultural contests, celebrations and festivals with the goal of promoting and disseminating the national culture both domestically and internationally. However, the **DGC-STP faces significant structural challenges**. There is a lack of budgetary autonomy and adequate technical resources, which impairs the scope and sustainability of its actions. The budget allocated to culture is insufficient, and the technical and human limitations are evident, with the institution managing multiple responsibilities with a small and under-specialized team. Finally, the DGC-STP is also working on regional projects and international partnerships to secure greater visibility and funding for São Tomé e Príncipe's cultural heritage. Cooperation with international organizations has been crucial, as **dependence on external funding is still a reality for most of the cultural initiatives in the country**.

Since 2015, the country has commemorated **National Culture Month** every **April** through a rich programme of events and cultural activities

São Tomé's Public Library, São Tomé Island
Photo: Cultivar Project, 2025

Among the **national public cultural institutions** are the **Historical Archive of São Tomé e Príncipe**, the **National Library**, the **House of Culture**, and the **National Museum**. All of these institutions currently require new equipment and structural renovations of their buildings. In the specific case of the Historical Archive, which holds a highly valuable historical collection, it is essential to provide IT equipment, tools for document digitisation, and physical renovations of the facilities to ensure proper storage conditions for historical documents. Currently, **São Tomé e Príncipe faces common challenges faced by many SIDS, hindering the development of the cultural sector**. **Limited institutional and human capacities**, **restricted access to funding** and international networks, and **inadequate adaptation to digital transformation** are key constraints, resulting in a reduced contribution of culture to development, despite its vast potential.

Despite these challenges, the government of São Tomé e Príncipe, with the support of UNESCO, has begun implementing a **new Cultural Policy Charter (2024)**, which replaces the 2014 version. This updated charter aims to strengthen the institutional framework for the cultural sector by fostering synergies between various ministries and cultural institutions, and by proposing the establishment of a national cultural fund to support local cultural initiatives. It is expected that this new policy will also help integrate the cultural sector into the country's economic and social development, reinforcing the role of culture as a driver of identity and progress.

Exhibition in Espaço CACAU (Casa das Artes, Criação, Ambiente e Utopias), São Tomé Island. Photo: Cultivar Project, 2025

Civil society is playing a key role in the ongoing evolution of São Tomé e Príncipe's cultural ecosystem

Several cultural institutions have played a crucial role in implementing cultural projects in São Tomé e Príncipe. Among these is **CACAU (House of Arts, Creation, Environment and Utopias)**, established in 2008, which plays a central role in promoting art, culture, and sustainable development in São Tomé e Príncipe. Housed in former colonial public works buildings, it functions as a multidisciplinary centre, offering spaces for exhibitions, artistic workshops, music and theatre performances, and public events that engage the local community. One of its key events is the **Biennial of Art and Culture**, held since 1995 and currently organised in partnership with the **Associação Roça Mundo**. Also worthy of note are Instituto **Camões – Instituto da Cooperação e da Língua, I.P.**, which promotes the Portuguese language and culture and supports cultural and educational initiatives in São Tomé e Príncipe; and **Instituto Marquês de Valle Flôr (IMVF)**, a Portuguese non-governmental organisation that implements projects in areas such as human development, education, and cultural and social cooperation; and **Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian**, co-financer of the PROCULTURA project – promoting employment in income-generating activities in the cultural sector in Portuguese-speaking African countries and Timor-Leste. Also noteworthy is **OMG Manga-Manga**, established in 2020, with key objectives including the research, documentation, and dissemination of São Tomé e Príncipe's culture, including a cultural map project. Additionally, **Associação de Defesa do Património de Mértola (ADPM)** has been actively promoting projects in culture and tourism.

These organisations work to strengthen local cultural identities and promote them as spaces for dialogue, transformation, and innovation. These institutions have significantly contributed to the country's cultural, social, and economic development through preservation, training, and cultural exchange projects. These partnerships have been essential in promoting local culture and fostering intercultural dialogue, helping to strengthen São Tomé e Príncipe's identity and its presence in the international cultural scene.

Museological structures remain underdeveloped

__ANALYSIS

The **national public museum ecosystem is extremely limited**, consisting solely of the **National Museum**, located in the São Sebastião Fortress, which is **currently undergoing renovation**.

The **MUNAC** project (**Renovation of the National Museum of São Tomé e Príncipe**), currently under development until 2027, will enable the rehabilitation of the building, the restoration and conservation of the existing museum collection, the implementation of training programmes, and the definition of a new museography project. It aims to promote the cultural, historical, and heritage significance of the National Museum of São Tomé e Príncipe as a key asset for the country's sustainable development. It is promoted by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Science and Higher Education of São Tomé e Príncipe, funded by Portuguese Cooperation through Camões – Institute for Cooperation and Language, and will be co-financed and implemented by the University of Évora, in partnership with three other

National Museum of São Tomé and Príncipe, in São Sebastião Fortress, São Tomé Island. Photo: Cultivar Project, 2025

Portuguese institutions: the National Laboratory for Civil Engineering, the José Figueiredo Laboratory, and the National Tile Museum.

Also noteworthy is the **Coffee Museum**, housed in the Roça Monte Café, which is managed through a partnership between the local community, the municipality, and the General Directorate of Tourism of São Tomé e Príncipe. Still on the island of São Tomé, the **Almada Negreiros House Museum** deserves mention. It is essentially a space dedicated to art and culture, featuring a room devoted to the artist's work and a bar/restaurant.

There are also some **civil society initiatives** that promote temporary and/or permanent exhibitions focusing on the history and cultural heritage of São Tomé.

Among them is **CACAU** (House of Arts, Creation, Environment and Utopias), which has **hosted, since 2019, a panel exhibition entitled *"São Tomé e Príncipe: Space and History"***, offering an immersive overview of the archipelago's trajectory, from its discovery by Portuguese navigators to its independence.

On Príncipe Island, special mention should be made of the **exhibition promoted by the Forever Príncipe! Conservation Alliance**, established in 2017 and based on the grounds of the Belo Monte Hotel (Santo António). The initiative develops essential research projects in natural conservation and includes an exhibition focused on the island's history and ecosystems.

Coffee Museum, in Roça Monte Café, São Tomé Island
Photo: Cultivar Project, 2025

In the same spirit of linking natural and cultural heritage, the **Museum of the Sea and Artisanal Fishing**, located in Morro Peixe (São Tomé Island), also deserves recognition. It is managed by the local NGO MARAPA, with support from partners and international

funding. Guided by local fishers, visits reflect good practice in community-based heritage management.

The country holds a rich yet largely undocumented intangible cultural heritage

São Tomé e Príncipe is home to a diverse and vibrant intangible cultural heritage, most of which has yet to be properly inventoried or safeguarded. Key cultural expressions include **local languages, dance, theatre, gastronomy, festivals and ritual practices**.

Among the **local languages** spoken in São Tomé e Príncipe are Forro – the most widely spoken Creole in the country – Angolar, which is concentrated mainly in the southeast of São Tomé Island, particularly in the town of São João dos Angolares, and Lung'Ie (also known as Principense), spoken on Príncipe Island. Lung'Ie is the most endangered of the Creoles, now spoken only by a small number of elderly individuals. Cabo Verdean Creole is also present, spoken by communities of Cabo Verdean descent who were brought to the islands during the colonial period to work on the plantations (Cardoso *et al*, 2015).

Traditional dances include the Puitá (of Angolan origin), ússua, socopé (one of the most popular), dança quiná, bulawé, and, on Príncipe Island, dexa.

Popular theatre plays a central role in the country's cultural identity, with notable examples such as Tchiloli, Auto de Floripes, and Danço Congo, all of which blend performance, storytelling, and music with historical and moral themes.

Socopé Linda Estlela, Socopé Linda Estlela de Santana in São Tomé city, december 1997. Photo: José A. Chambel. Available in cultura.st

Festivals and rituals are heavily influenced by Christianity, introduced during the colonial period. However, traditional beliefs — particularly in magic and the occult — remain strongly rooted in Santomean identity, as exemplified by the D'Jambi Ritual.

The country's **craft tradition** reflects the fusion of African, Portuguese, and Creole heritages. It draws on natural materials and everyday life for inspiration. Commonly used materials include recycled wood, coconuts, seeds, natural fibres such as raffia, shells, and volcanic stones. Local artisans produce wooden sculptures (such as masks, animals, and human figures), traditional musical instruments (drums and marimbas), woven baskets and textiles, jewellery made from natural elements, and both decorative and utilitarian objects inspired by agricultural and maritime life.

São Tomé e Príncipe is currently undertaking a project entitled "**Development of a National Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage**" funded and **implemented in partnership with UNESCO**. As the first initiative of its kind in the country, it aims to establish a national framework for documenting intangible heritage, while also enhancing the skills and engagement of local communities and relevant stakeholders involved in its protection. In April 2025, **UNESCO held a capacity-building workshop for the national team responsible for the inventory process**. The group includes members of local communities, municipal staff, and cultural heritage professionals.

CULTIVAR Project n. 101179293
Co-funded by the European Union

São Tomé's first steps toward UNESCO listing highlight the country's cultural and natural richness, marking a key national commitment to protect its heritage

In 2022, the country developed its first indicative list of cultural and natural heritage. The natural heritage indicative list includes the Obô Natural Parks on São Tomé e Príncipe islands, while the cultural heritage list features the Roças Monte Café and Água Izé on São Tomé, as well as Roça Sundy on Príncipe Island. The UNESCO Regional Director for Central Africa referred to the potential of São Tomé e Príncipe's natural heritage, describing it as "a very important reserve of biodiversity on the planet." He further added that "this should be an opportunity not only for São Tomé e Príncipe but for the entire planet, and a matter of credibility for the international community to support São Tomé e Príncipe's efforts to preserve and enhance these riches."

The indicative list registered on the UNESCO portal includes two items recorded in 2023: Roças de Monte Café, Água-Izé, and Sundy of São Tomé e Príncipe, and the Volcanic Islands of São Tomé e Príncipe.

This list was a significant milestone, marking the beginning of a formal process to protect the country's unique cultural and natural assets.

National and international **press reported that, in early 2025, the country would formalise its first application to the World Heritage List, which will include the six roças: São João de Angolares, Água-Izé, Monte Café, and Diogo Vaz on São Tomé Island, and Belo Monte and Sundy on Príncipe Island.** This application follows a preparation process that began in 2023 and is expected to take about two years.

Tchiloli. Photo: Ji-Elle, 2019
Available in Wikimedia Commons, licensed by CC BY-SA 4.0

São Tomé e Príncipe is one of the ten African countries that

does not yet have any items on the World Heritage List. However, Príncipe Island in São Tomé e Príncipe has been a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve since 2012.

Regarding **Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH)**, São Tomé e Príncipe currently has an ongoing nomination for ***Tchiloli, the living theatre of São Tomé e Príncipe in the quest for justice***, with voting for its inclusion in the **UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity** expected in 2025.

STP UNESCO Conventions Ratified	
Year of Ratification	**UNESCO Convention**
3 October 2024	Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property (1970)
3 October 2024	Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage (2001)
3 October 2024	Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005)
16 October 2020	International Convention against Doping in Sport (2005)
21 August 2006 (Accessed)	Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat (1971)
25 July 2006	Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003)
25 July 2006	Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972)

__CONCLUSION

Built heritage remains at risk, despite some successful preservation projects

The tangible cultural heritage of São Tomé e Príncipe is in a state of structural vulnerability, with limited resources dedicated to its preservation, weak inventory systems, and scarce institutional coordination. There is a lack of consistent public policies and an integrated approach to heritage conservation and enhancement, **with the roças being particularly at risk.**

It is estimated that there may have been between 207 and 310 roças, from the late 19th century to independence in 1975 (Tenreiro, 1961; Berthet, 2012). Upon independence, the government took control of the roças, nationalizing them and introducing agrarian reforms in 1975. This process involved restructuring the management and ownership of the land, although the agricultural organization largely retained colonial patterns, and cocoa production remained central to the economy through the 1970s and 1980s. The agrarian reform policies introduced in the 1990s aimed to address social inequalities and the legacy of colonial-era land ownership, involving the redistribution of land and the division of larger estates into smaller parcels through a system involving both private and public interests (Berthet, 2012). However, despite these efforts, the economic crisis, lack of investment, and outdated agricultural practices led to the gradual abandonment of the roças.

Most of the roças are in a state of disrepair, although there are notable examples of refurbishment and enhancement projects focused on tourism and the creative industries — including the transformation of these infrastructures into

Hospital of the Roça Agostinho Neto, São Tomé Island
Photo: Cultivar Project, 2025

CULTIVAR Project n. 101179293
Co-funded by the European Union

AGRI CULTURA Project, in Roça Água-Izé, São Tomé Island
Photo: Cultivar Project, 2025

Run-down building, São Tomé Island
Photo: Cultivar Project, 2025

accommodations and hotels, restaurants, or spaces for artistic residencies and exhibitions.

Among the most notable examples on the island of São Tomé is **Roça São João dos Angolares**, whose *casa grande* has been transformed into a rural eco-tourism lodge that includes a restaurant led by chef João Carlos Silva. The property also functions as an art centre and ecological plantation. **Roça Santo António**, now operating as an Eco Lodge, has also restored its *casa grande*. **Roça Monte Forte** likewise offers rural accommodation. Meanwhile, at **Roça de Água-Izé**, the AGRI CULTURA project—funded by Camões – Instituto da Cooperação e da Língua—is currently underway, with the aim of establishing a Cocoa Interpretation Centre (Núcleo Museológico de Cacau).

On Príncipe Island, **Roça Sundy** and **Roça Belo Monte** have been converted into luxury hospitality units, both managed by the hotel group HBD. These properties have retained their

original architectural features and plantation machinery, offering guests an immersive heritage experience.

A significant portion of the **urban heritage of the capital**, São Tomé city—**including colonial-era houses and other historic buildings—is at risk or in urgent need of restoration**.

Roça São João dos Angolares, São Tomé Island
Photo: Cultivar Project, 2025

Capacity building of human resources is essential to ensure the safeguarding of São Tomé e Príncipe's cultural heritage

Developing human resources is a critical requirement for the safeguarding, preservation, and promotion of São Tomé e Príncipe's cultural heritage. While the country possesses a rich and diverse cultural legacy — including built heritage, historic landscapes, and vibrant intangible traditions — the full potential of this heritage remains underutilised, largely due to limitations in institutional capacity and technical expertise.

The cultural sector faces a persistent **shortage of qualified professionals** in areas such as

Roça Sundy Hotel, Príncipe Island
Photo: Cultivar Project, 2025

heritage conservation, **museology**, **archival management**, and **cultural project coordination**. Public national higher education institutions — particularly the USTP — are set to play an increasingly prominent role, as they introduce a postgraduate specialisation programme in the field of cultural heritage and establish the country's first doctoral programme in the social sciences — a crucial step towards strengthening research capacity in cultural and heritage-related fields.

Public institutions often operate with insufficient staffing and limited technical training, which restricts their ability to carry out long-term planning, ensure proper conservation practices, or promote cultural initiatives effectively.

Capacity building is not only necessary within the public sector, but also across civil society, where local actors play an increasingly important role in cultural preservation and community-based heritage initiatives. Investing in education, vocational training, and knowledge exchange — particularly in heritage management, cultural entrepreneurship, and digital skills — is essential to empower both institutions and communities to care for, interpret, and transmit their cultural assets.

Training session in wood conservation at the National Museum of São Tomé e Príncipe. Photo: MUNAC Project, 2025

Continued support for human resource development, including through national strategies and international cooperation, will be vital to ensure the sustainability of heritage efforts. Strengthening these capacities will help reinforce the value of culture in national development, improve the visibility of São Tomé e Príncipe's heritage globally, and guarantee that future generations are equipped to protect and celebrate the country's cultural identity.

CULTIVAR Project n. 101179293
Co-funded by the European Union

It is equally essential **to promote the development of new cultural projects, supported by international funding**, but **also through increased national investment**. These initiatives should aim to generate content such as exhibitions, educational materials, cultural tourism itineraries, and other interpretive resources — as much remains to be done to safeguard, inventory, document, enhance, and enable the enjoyment of the country's cultural heritage.
While modest in scale, we believe that the CULTIVAR project will nonetheless contribute meaningfully to addressing these challenges.

2.4. Natural Heritage

The natural landscape is the island's trademark

__DESCRIPTION

São Tomé e Príncipe stands out in the Gulf of Guinea for its **exceptional natural landscape and rich biodiversity**. As volcanic oceanic islands of relatively recent geological origin, they host a **unique combination of lush rainforests, mountainous terrain, and diverse microclimates** — resulting in **remarkably high levels of endemism**.
São Tomé, the larger island, features **Pico de São Tomé (or Pico do Cão Grande)** at 2,024 metres, making it **the highest point in the region** and a central **element of its scenic identity**. Its steep topography, dense forests, and cloud-covered peaks form the backdrop for a wide array of ecosystems, from coastal lowlands to montane forests.

Pico de São Tomé or Pico do Cão Grande, São Tomé Island
Photo: Cultivar Project, 2025

São Tomé olive pigeon (*Columba thomensis*). Photo: Thibaud Aronson, 2018. Available in biodiversity4all.org, CC BY-SA 4.0

The islands' isolation has allowed for the evolution of **numerous endemic species of plants, birds, reptiles, and amphibians**. Among the most notable examples are the São Tomé olive pigeon (*Columba thomensis*), the Príncipe sunbird (*Anabathmis hartlaubii*), and several endemic amphibians, such as the São Tomé caecilian (*Schistometopum thomense*), which is among the most ancient vertebrate lineages found on the islands. São Tomé e Príncipe is recognised as both an Endemic Bird Area (EBA) and an Important Bird and Biodiversity Area (IBA), with 28 bird species found nowhere else on Earth — placing the country among the world's top hotspots for avian diversity (Deffontaines, 2019).

The **Obô Natural Park**, covering significant forested areas, plays a vital role in the protection of these habitats. The Obô Natural Park of São Tomé, created in 2006, covers around 195 km² and safeguards key habitats for endemic and endangered species. The **Obô Natural Park**

CULTIVAR Project n. 101179293
Co-funded by the European Union

of Príncipe, created in 2009, encompasses nearly half of the island. Since **2012**, **Príncipe Island** has also been recognised by **UNESCO** as a **Biosphere Reserve**, acknowledging its global ecological importance and the need for sustainable development. The **preserved native forest covers 45% of Príncipe Island's area** (República Democrática de São Tomé e Príncipe 2021b).

Despite their small size, São Tomé e Príncipe's ecosystems are ecologically diverse and fragile. Ongoing conservation efforts seek to balance biodiversity protection with sustainable development, particularly in the face of climate change and land-use pressures. **The islands' dramatic natural scenery** — waterfalls, volcanic formations, dense rainforest, and black sand beaches — not only defines their ecological importance but also **reinforces their identity as one of Africa's most iconic insular landscapes**.

Obô Natural Park, São Tomé Island
Photo: Cultivar Project, 2025

Musaranho-de-São-Tomé (*Crocidura thomensis*). Photo: Ricardo Lima, 2009
Available in biodiversity4all.org, CC0

CULTIVAR Project n. 101179293
Co-funded by the European Union

Príncipe redwood (*Pterocarpus officinalis*). Photo: Pancrat, 2017
Available in Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 4.0

Natural parks have management plans to ensure conservation and preservation

Both of São Tomé e Príncipe's natural parks — the **Obô Natural Park of São Tomé** (PNOST) and the **Príncipe Natural Park** (PNP) — **have up-to-date management plans that guide biodiversity conservation and the sustainable use of natural resources**.

The PNOST plan is coordinated by the Directorate of Protected Areas and Biodiversity (DAPB), under the Ministry of Agriculture, with technical support from the BIOPAMA project and EU funding (República Democrática de São Tomé e Príncipe 2021a). The PNP plan is overseen by the Department of the Biosphere Reserve and Príncipe Natural Park (DRBPNP), in collaboration with the Príncipe Foundation, BirdLife International, and ECOFAC6 (República Democrática de São Tomé e Príncipe 2021b).

Both parks are dominated by tropical humid forest, structured by altitude. PNOST includes lowland rainforest (up to 800 m), montane forest (800–1400 m), and high-altitude vegetation (above 1400 m), home to endemic tree species such as black afara (Aningeria spp.), São Tomé yellowwood (*Afrocarpus mannii*), redwood (*Staudtia stipitata*) and African plum (*Gambeya africana*). In the PNP, forest types range from submontane (200–600 m) to montane (above 600 m), alongside riparian and secondary forest, with notable species such as Príncipe redwood (*Staudtia pterocarpa*), Calvoa (*Calvoa angolensis*), Príncipe begonia (*Begonia baccata*) and rosewood (*Pterocarpus officinalis*).

The **PNP also includes a significant marine zone**, comprising coral reefs, seagrass beds, and algal fields, providing habitat for green and hawksbill turtles, reef fish, and marine mammals.

CULTIVAR Project n. 101179293
Co-funded by the European Union

Common **threats** identified in both plans include **unregulated agriculture**, **illegal logging**, **poaching**, and **invasive species**. The PNP additionally faces pressure from **unregulated fishing** and **increasing coastal tourism pressure.**
Strategic **priorities** across both parks include **ecological zoning**, **community participation**, **biodiversity monitoring**, **ecotourism promotion**, and **establishing long-term financial and institutional mechanisms**. These plans serve as key tools for balancing conservation with local well-being and international commitments.
On the other hand, **São Tomé e Príncipe**, besides the main islands, **has a unique marine habitat comprising Pedras Tinhosas**, a small archipelago located 11 miles south of Príncipe Island. Though part of the Príncipe Island Biosphere Reserve, the ecosystem remains understudied. A notable feature is the interaction between deep-sea geophysical dynamics and the small islets. Despite challenges in anchoring and disembarking, they offer a unique spot for marine life observation and could be sustainably explored by yachtsmen and experienced divers.

Endemic Species of STP
Coconzucu / Rabo-de-palha-de-bico-laranja (*Phaeton lepturos*)
Atobá-pardo (*Sula leucogaster*)
Atobá-grande (*Sula dactylatra*)
Trinta-réis-escuro (*Anous stolidus*)
Trinta-réis-preto (*Anous minutos*)
Codorniz-arlequim (*Coturnix delegorguei*)
Osga-gigante-de-Greeff (*Hemidactylus greeffii*)
Lagarto Afroablepharus africanus (*Afroablepharus africanus*)
Cobra-escavadora (*Rhinotyphlops newtoni*)
Jita (*Boaedon lineatus*)
Lagarto-sem-patas (*Feylinia polylepis*)
Cobra-bobo-do-Príncipe (*Typlops elegans*)
Cobra-verde do Príncipe (*Hapsidophrys principis*)
Osga dourada (*Hemidactylus principensi*)
Geco-anão-de-Ano Bom (*Lygodactylus thomensis*)
Rela-de-poça-de-Príncipe (*Phrynobatrachus díspar*)
Cobra-bobô (*Schistometopum thomense*)
Rã-arbórea-gigante-de-são-tomé (*Hyperolius thomensis*)
Rã-das-palmeiras (*Leptopelis palmatus*)
Rã-da-planície-de-Newton (*Ptychadena newtoni*)
Musaranho-de-São-Tomé (*Crocidura thomensis*)

ANALYSIS__

Sea turtle conservation is a national commitment that has become a shared responsibility

São Tomé e Príncipe is a vital breeding and feeding ground **for five of the world's seven species of sea turtles**: green, olive ridley, hawksbill, leatherback, and loggerhead turtles (Ferreira-Airaud, 2022).

The islands' beaches serve as critical nesting and feeding grounds for these globally threatened species.

Historically, sea turtles were widely hunted for their meat, eggs, and shells — a practice that significantly endangered their populations. In response to mounting concerns, the government of São Tomé e Príncipe adopted **Decree-Law No. 08/2014, officially banning the capture, possession, sale, and consumption of sea turtles** and their derivatives. This law marked a turning point in marine conservation efforts in the country.

Since then, **conservation has been driven largely** by community-based initiatives, particularly through **Programa Tatô** on São Tomé and **Fundação Príncipe** on Príncipe Island. These organisations work closely with coastal communities, many of whom were formerly involved in turtle hunting. Today, **local residents are directly engaged in conservation** as trained beach monitors, responsible for protecting nests, collecting scientific data, and raising awareness.

Green-sea-turtle (*Chelonia mydas*). Photo: Brocken Inaglory, 2008
Available in Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 4.0

Currently, **over 75 km of coastline on São Tomé are monitored across more than 70 nesting beaches**. These efforts are supported by a combination of national and international funding, and coordinated in partnership with local authorities, NGOs, and UNESCO. **Environmental education programmes**, **sustainable**

tourism activities such as **turtle watching**, and the creation of alternative livelihoods have further contributed to changing attitudes and reducing illegal turtle exploitation.

Museum of the Sea and Artisanal Fishing, in Morro Peixe, São Tomé Island
Photo: Cultivar Project, 2025

An important complement to these conservation efforts is the **Museum of the Sea and Artisanal Fishing**, located in **Morro Peixe**, on the island of São Tomé. Managed by the local NGO **MARAPA** (Mar, Ambiente e Pesca Artesanal), with support from international partners such as the Tatô Programme, the museum serves as a space for **education, awareness, and community engagement**. It showcases the rich maritime heritage of the island, the history of artisanal fishing, and the importance of marine biodiversity. Through interactive exhibitions and guided visits led by local fishers, the museum highlights the cultural and ecological significance of species like sea turtles, promoting their protection as part of a broader effort to preserve both natural and cultural heritage.

The success of these initiatives reflects the importance of combining legal protection with inclusive, community-led conservation. Continued investment in capacity building, environmental education, and sustainable funding mechanisms remains essential to ensure the long-term survival of these emblematic species and the marine ecosystems they inhabit.

The forest holds strategic importance for sustainable development

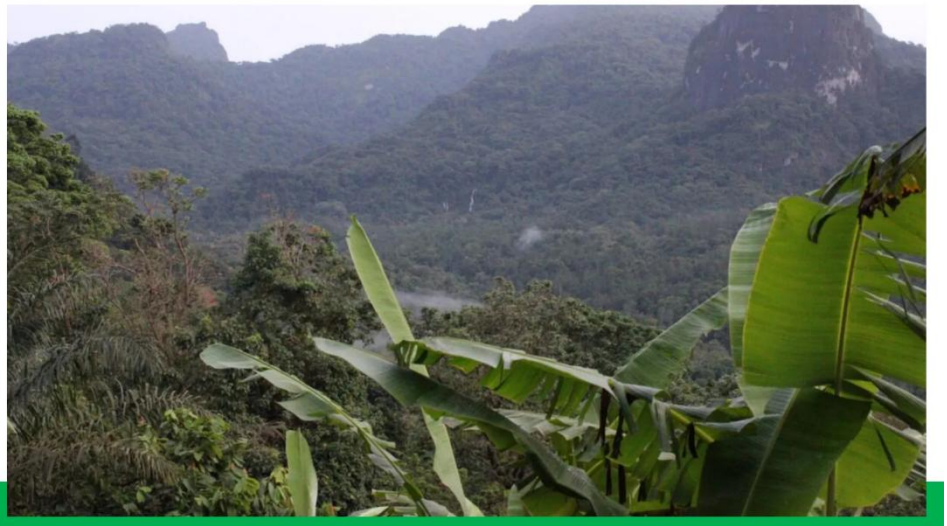
Forests in São Tomé e Príncipe play a **critical ecological, cultural, and socio-economic role**. These tropical ecosystems support an extraordinary level of biodiversity and endemism, making the archipelago a global conservation priority.

The forests have a central role, not only as biodiversity strongholds but also as providers of essential ecosystem services, such as **climate regulation**, **flood protection**, **clean water supply**, and **soil stabilisation**. These services are especially critical for local communities and urban centres that depend on the health of surrounding natural systems.

Beyond their ecological value, **forests hold deep cultural significance**. Many endemic species are embedded in local knowledge systems, myths, and oral traditions — grounded in **Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK)** — reflecting the strong connection between nature and identity in São Tomé e Príncipe (Deffontaines, 2019).

However, the **country's forests are under growing pressure** from **agricultural expansion** — particularly palm oil plantations — **urban development**, **unregulated tourism**, and **invasive species** such as cats, dogs, and snakes. These **threats are compounded by institutional constraints**, including **limited enforcement capacity** and **weak land-use planning** (Deffontaines, 2019).

In light of these challenges, more integrated conservation policies are needed, promoting synergies between environmental protection, agriculture, tourism, and urban planning. Ensuring the long-term protection of forests will require not only legal safeguards and external support but also stronger national governance, scientific research, and community-based initiatives.



Príncipe Island has been a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve since 2012
Obô Natural Park, Príncipe Island, 2022.
Available in reservadabiosfera.pt

In the face of mounting debt, forests have emerged as a strategic opportunity. With external debt reaching 85% of GDP in 2023, **São Tomé e Príncipe has begun exploring debt-for-nature swaps** — mechanisms that redirect debt relief into investments in forest protection and biodiversity conservation. These instruments offer a way to ease

fiscal pressure while advancing climate goals and supporting sustainable development, including ecotourism and climate resilience (Lorenzato, 2024). Forest conservation in São Tomé e Príncipe is not only an ecological imperative, but also a means of valuing natural capital as a foundation for sustainable development, resilience, and cultural continuity within the country's recovery and adaptation strategies.

São Tomé e Príncipe's natural assets can drive inclusive and sustainable growth

__CONCLUSION

São Tomé e Príncipe is emerging as a model of sustainable island development, where **its rich natural heritage** — including terrestrial, marine, and landscape biodiversity — **is being positioned as a strategic economic asset**. The **combination of ecotourism and the blue economy provides** a dual pathway for **income generation, environmental protection, and social inclusion**.

The archipelago's pristine and exuberant nature — featuring tropical rainforests, endemic bird species, nesting sea turtles, and traditional coastal communities — has become a growing economic driver. The regional government of Príncipe has officially recognised **ecotourism as a pillar of sustainable development**, promoting green job creation and reinforcing local autonomy through community-based initiatives. A key milestone in this strategy was the designation of Príncipe as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve in 2012, which attracted investment and provided international validation for the

North coast, in Morro Peixe, São Tomé Island
Photo: Cultivar Project, 2025

country's integrated conservation approach (Matos, 2021). Tourists are increasingly drawn by the country's tranquillity, biological richness, and unique cultural landscape, making São Tomé e Príncipe an increasingly competitive destination for nature-based tourism.

Initiatives such as turtle-watching projects, led by programmes like Programa Tatô, have proven highly effective in converting former hunters into ecotourism guides — creating new income streams and raising environmental awareness within local communities (Mendes *et al*., 2019). In addition to protecting biodiversity, these initiatives generate a multiplier effect on the local economy — from family-run guesthouses and restaurants to tour guiding and artisanal crafts.

In parallel, São Tomé e Príncipe adopted the **National Blue Economy Transition Plan** in **2019**, placing **strong emphasis on the preservation of marine ecosystems**. The plan aims to strengthen sustainable management of ocean resources and promote low-impact marine tourism. Priority projects include modernizing artisanal coastal fishing in ways that reduce environmental harm and developing educational tourism experiences that highlight and support marine conservation (World Bank, 2024).

The **protection of mangrove forests and coastal habitats is also a top priority**, given their critical role as biodiversity nurseries and natural defences against coastal erosion. Local communities are considered central partners in this effort, with capacity-building and environmental monitoring initiatives already underway (Haroun *et al*., 2018).

International Conventions Signed by STP on Nature Conservation	
Year of Ratification	**Convention/Protocol**
2017	Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing (2014)
2016	Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (2016)
2014	Basileia Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal (1992)
2013	Minamata Convention on Mercury (2013)

2013	Rotterdam Convention on the regulation of international trade in dangerous chemicals (1998)
2008	Kyoto Protocol (1997)
2006	Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) (2005)
2006	Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, especially as Waterfowl Habitat (1975)
2001	Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer (1989)
2001	Vienna Convention on the Protection of the Ozone Layer (1988)
2001	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) (1975)
2000	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) (1992)
1998	Convention to Combat Desertification (1996)
1998	Convention on Biological Diversity (1992)

2.5. Tourism

Tourism is a clearly recognised national strategic priority

__DESCRIPTION

The **Directorate-General for Tourism and Hospitality** (**DHTH**) is the body responsible for managing and planning tourism in the country, currently (as of 2025) operating under the Ministry of the Environment, Youth and Sustainable Tourism of the Government of São Tomé e Príncipe.

Over the years, **the country has developed specific regulations aimed at promoting tourism in a sustainable manner**. In 2017, the *Tourism Framework Law* was enacted, establishing the fundamental principles and objectives of the National Tourism Policy.

According to the **Strategic and Marketing Plan for Tourism in São Tomé e Príncipe 2018–2025** (Mid-Term Review, 2023), the country's top tourism priorities focus on developing a **sustainable, inclusive, and authentic model**. Community-based tourism is emphasised, promoting active local participation, traditional culture, biodiversity, and ancestral knowledge, while ensuring direct

benefits for local populations. Key tourism products include nature, sun and sea, culture, gastronomy, and the historical heritage of cocoa and coffee plantations.

Diversifying source markets is also a clear goal, aiming to reduce dependency on Portuguese tourism. To achieve this, **the country plans to expand its digital presence**, **improve communication channels**, and **target new international audience**s through promotional campaigns. Improving the overall visitor experience—especially accommodation, dining, infrastructure, and inter-island connectivity—is seen as critical to global competitiveness.

The plan identifies **four strategic pillars** — **Capacity Building**, **Communication**, **Community**, and **Knowledge** — to guide actions through 2025. These priorities align with efforts to strengthen tourism governance, promote environmentally responsible practices, and pursue UNESCO heritage nominations, positioning São Tomé e Príncipe as a sustainable, safe, and distinctive destination in the African and Lusophone context.

Looking ahead, the country's tourism vision rests on the balance between growth and preservation. By empowering local communities, safeguarding natural and cultural assets, and enhancing global visibility, São Tomé e Príncipe aims to build a tourism sector that not only supports economic development but also reinforces national identity and resilience in the face of global challenges.

Sea of São Tomé Island
Photo: Cultivar Project, 2025

Tourism is becoming an ever more significant contributor to the national economy

According to data from the United Nations for the year 2022, the **tourism sector accounted for approximately 20% of São Tomé e Príncipe's GDP and around 74% of the country's total exports**.

The **2024 bulletin from the Directorate-General for Tourism and Hospitality** (DHTH) **indicates** that São Tomé e Príncipe experienced **significant growth in the tourism sector**, recording a total of 40,822 international visitors—an increase of 14% compared to the previous year. This notable rise reflects the **consolidation of air arrivals** and the **growing dynamism of cruise tourism**.

Air travel remained the main mode of entry, with 31,422 arrivals. However, the maritime sector stood out most, registering 9,400 arrivals—a strong surge driven by an increase in cruise ship calls. This trend had a clear impact on the seasonality of visits: November recorded the highest number of arrivals (7,773), heavily influenced by cruise traffic, while April saw the lowest influx, with just 2,006 visitors. In terms of source markets, **Portugal firmly established itself as the leading country of origin for air travellers**, accounting for **54% of the total** (17,092 tourists). It was followed by the United States (8%), France (5%), Angola (5%), Germany (4%), and the United Kingdom (3%).

Among cruise passengers, the **United States led** with 41%, followed by the United Kingdom (12%) and Canada (9%).

As for the purpose of travel by air, tourism and leisure accounted for 61% of entries, highlighting the country's appeal for nature-based, cultural, and relaxation-oriented tourism.

Regionally, **Europe stood out as the primary source of international visitors**, representing **71% of the total**. The CPLP (Community of Portuguese Language Countries) also played a key role, contributing 63% of arrivals, mainly from Portugal, Angola, and Brazil. Africa (15%) and the Americas (9%) are currently secondary markets, but they hold strong potential for future expansion.

In summary, the 2024 data confirm a growth trajectory for

Ecolodge in front of Inhame Beach
Photo: Cultivar Project, 2025

tourism in São Tomé e Príncipe, with Portugal firmly established as the main source market. Cruise tourism is rapidly expanding, driving seasonal peaks and diversifying visitor profiles. **Leisure-related travel remains dominant, reinforcing the strategic importance of ecotourism and cultural tourism**. Finally, the country's strong ties with CPLP nations continue to serve as a key driver of affinity tourism, fostering historical and cultural connections that support the sustainable development of the sector.

In terms of available **accommodation types**, large **resort-style hotels stand out**, with a strong focus on sun and beach tourism. **Growing in number are beachfront ecolodges and rural lodges** associated with the roças in the island's interior. In the capital, there are also a few small hotels and urban guesthouses. The country has applied a **tourist tax since 2016**, reflecting a strategic vision of tourism as a driver of economic development and a means of generating resources to enhance and preserve its tourism assets.

ANALYSIS__

Tourism development is seriously constrained by the poor quality and lack of essential infrastructure

Deficient infrastructure — characterised by **severely deteriorated roads**, the **absence of adequate maritime facilities** including a deep-water port capable of accommodating cruise ships or larger passenger vessels, and an **international airport still undergoing critical upgrades** — remains a major obstacle to the growth of tourism. Internal mobility is further constrained by the lack of reliable public transport, while the airport on Príncipe Island operates exclusively domestic flights.

These limitations make it difficult to ensure reliable access to key tourist sites, particularly those in rural or coastal areas, **and hinder the efficient flow of goods and services necessary for the tourism supply chain**. Poor road conditions restrict internal mobility, limiting the development of tour circuits and discouraging longer stays. The lack of a proper cruise port reduces the country's ability to benefit from the growing cruise tourism market, while

airport constraints limit both the volume and diversity of international arrivals, as well as the country's integration into regional air networks.

Moreover, the lack of infrastructure not only affects accessibility but also **limits the diversification of tourism** offerings and reduces visitor satisfaction, particularly in rural areas where many of the country's most authentic and culturally rich experiences are located. Without adequate transport links and basic visitor facilities, these regions remain marginalised from the main tourism circuits, perpetuating spatial inequalities and weakening the potential for inclusive tourism-led development (Mota, 2021).

Palm oil plantation, south of São Tomé Island
Photo: Cultivar Project, 2025

Still, these limitations offer a chance to rethink the tourism model São Tomé e Príncipe aims to develop. Limited access and capacity have, to some extent, protected the country from the negative impacts of mass tourism—particularly the "sun and sea" model, often linked to environmental degradation and cultural loss. Addressing infrastructure gaps in a targeted and sustainable way could help shape a tourism sector that is low-impact, community-driven, and rooted in the country's natural and cultural heritage.

CULTIVAR Project n. 101179293
Co-funded by the European Union

Fishing village, São Tomé Island
Photo: Cultivar Project, 2025

But we must not forget that **these challenges also represent a significant impediment to the country's broader development, affecting trade, regional integration, and, above all, the quality of life of the São Toméan population**.

In particular, the **weaknesses in health infrastructure** highlight the cross-sector impact of underinvestment. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), many health facilities in São Tomé e Príncipe suffer from inadequate water, sanitation and hygiene conditions, limited availability of essential medicines, and recurring supply shortages (WHO, 2024). These shortcomings are exacerbated by poor roads and transport links, which delay medical assistance and supply delivery, as well as by limited airport capacity, which restricts emergency responses and medical tourism.

These infrastructure deficits create a vicious cycle, hindering access to services, limiting economic diversification, and reducing resilience to crises. Addressing them is therefore not only critical for boosting tourism, but also essential to ensure inclusive and sustainable development for São Tomé e Príncipe.

The country has made a clear commitment to tourism training

São Tomé e Príncipe is **investing strategically in tourism education and guide training** to bolster sector quality and professionalism.

São Tomé e Príncipe launched the project for its first **School of Hospitality and Tourism** in October 2021, with a public tender funded by the World Bank amounting to approximately USD 1.5 million. The investment was aimed at

constructing a modern facility—including a kitchen, bar, classrooms, and professional management infrastructure—while also supporting the training of local professionals. By August 2023, construction had been completed, and instructors had been trained with the support of CELFF Education from Portugal, paving the way for the school to welcome its first students. The school was **officially inaugurated on 1 February 2025** and had already trained over 1,700 professionals during its first year of operation, reinforcing the country's strategic commitment to education as a driver of sustainable growth in the tourism and hospitality sector.

Simultaneously, the Directorate-General for Tourism and Hospitality rolled out a **formal training programme for tour guides**, issuing professional certification cards to 23 guides in March 2025, which builds upon earlier certification of 19 guides on Ilhéu das Rolas trained via a UNESCO-backed initiative.

These developments mark a significant shift in the country's tourism strategy—**moving beyond informal guiding and basic hospitality towards structured, quality-driven services**. Enhanced guide training ensures visitors gain deeper insight into São Tomé e Príncipe's unique biodiversity, culture, and heritage.

At the same time, the School of Hospitality and Tourism is **developing a pool of skilled professionals across the tourism value chain**—from hotel operations to customer service—supporting improved visitor experiences and job creation.

Looking ahead, these investments in human capital are key for the islands to progress from niche, nature-based tourism to higher-value, sustainable offerings. This not only enhances service quality and competitiveness, but also helps embed community benefit, cultural authenticity, and environmental stewardship at the heart of São Tomé e Príncipe's tourism vision.

Ecotourism, Blue Tourism and Cultural Tourism are emerging as key trends to be consolidated

__CONCLUSION

Alongside **sun-and-beach tourism — still the dominant segment** in the country, particularly linked to large hotel units and resorts — **nature-based tourism is gaining increasing prominence**. **Ecotourism** is currently the most developed form of sustainable tourism in São Tomé e Príncipe, closely tied to the country's rich biodiversity and protected areas. It encompasses experiences such as hiking (including visits to waterfalls), birdwatching, adventure tourism,

and immersive contact with nature (Viegas, 2025). Ecolodges, both coastal and rural, serve as key infrastructure supporting this type of tourism.

According to United Nations data, as of 2025, São Tomé e Príncipe is considered the most untouched island tourism destination in equatorial Africa, boasting unique nature and biodiversity.

Rural tourism, which is also expanding, **revolves around the roças and the country's agricultural and historical heritage**. It is often associated with cocoa and coffee production, including chocolate tasting (e.g. Roça Diogo Vaz), sampling of locally produced coffee (e.g. Roça Monte Café), and the promotion of local brands and cooperatives.

Cultural tourism — including historical heritage and gastronomy — **remains less developed** than nature-based segments. The cultural tourism offer is limited, with most experiences centred on cocoa and coffee heritage through visits to former plantations (roças). Although some travel agencies and tour operators provide **guided packages**, the lack of infrastructure — such as signage, brochures, and visitor information — makes **independent cultural exploration difficult**. An important step was taken in 2013 with the publication of the first comprehensive tourist guide to São Tomé e Príncipe in Portuguese, yet challenges in accessibility and infrastructure persist.

Lagoa Azul in São Tomé Island
Photo: Cultivar Project, 2025

Community-based tourism is frequently identified as a strategic approach to generating more equitably distributed social and economic benefits. It typically involves locally guided tours, cultural experiences, and activities organised by community associations.

Inhame beach, view of Ilhéu das Rolas, São Tomé Island
Photo: Cultivar Project, 2025

In parallel, **volunteer tourism** has been explored as a potential tool for sustainable development in São Tomé e Príncipe. Several initiatives illustrate this approach, such as the Tatô Project led by MARAPA, which engages volunteers in marine conservation efforts, and organisations like Natcultura and RoçaMundo, which support local development through literacy and arts-based programmes. The NGO Leigos para o Desenvolvimento contributes through community-based education and cultural initiatives, while on Príncipe Island, Fundação Príncipe and Sonha, Faz e Acontece focus on biodiversity conservation and youth entrepreneurship, respectively (Lopes, 2023).

Some emerging studies suggest that volunteer tourism in São Tomé e Príncipe holds significant potential but requires stronger regulation and planning to ensure long-term benefits and avoid unintended negative impacts. The research highlights the importance of building strong partnerships between NGOs, tour operators, and local authorities, alongside proper training for volunteers. It advocates for an ethical model of tourism that prioritises respect for host communities and the strengthening of local capacities (Lopes, 2023).

Tourism is considered a key activity within the blue economy, with the potential to generate revenue while simultaneously valuing and conserving the marine environment.

The **National Blue Economy Transition Plan** (2019) identifies coastal and marine tourism as a strategic sector, aiming to develop low-impact tourism experiences that support both environmental sustainability and local livelihoods. Institutionally, the plan is led by the Ministry and was enacted as

national law in 2022 (Law No. 38/XI/8e/2022). Key priorities include educational marine tourism, ecotourism, and the rehabilitation of coastal areas with tourism potential, aiming to showcase the country's rich natural and oceanic heritage (World Bank, 2024).

One of the plan's priorities is the upgrading of beaches such as Lagoa Azul, Praia Piscina and Tamarinos. Improvements include better access infrastructure, eco-friendly amenities such as solar-powered showers and waste systems, tourist kiosks, signage, and basic facilities like toilets and small restaurants. Another key component is the development of "blue cabotage" — a coastal maritime transport network linking islands and major coastal areas. This aims to improve the mobility of goods and people, while also promoting inter-island tourism. Planned upgrades include ports such as Ponta Mina, Porto Alegre, Ribeira Peixe and Santa Catarina (FAO, 2022).

Within the scope of Blue Tourism, activities such as **sea turtle watching**, **educational boat trips with local fishers**, **marine ecotourism based on coastal biodiversity**, and **environmental education integrated into tourism** are areas either expanding or with strong potential for growth (Rocha, 2021). Additionally, São Tomé e Príncipe's rich natural and marine assets — including high biodiversity, protected marine areas, and clear waters — provide excellent conditions for the development of **diving tourism**, particularly along the coastline and near islets such as Ilhéu das Rolas and Ilhéu das Cabras (Brito, 2020). Nonetheless, this remains a largely untapped niche, constrained by limited infrastructure, insufficient professional training, and weak international promotion.

Its long-term vision, outlined in the National Blue Economy Strategy, is to position São Tomé e Príncipe as a regional hub for sustainable tourism and blue economy in the Gulf of Guinea. The ambition is to become a model of biodiversity, marine protection and responsible tourism, with the island of Príncipe highlighted as a global reference for ecological tourism and sustainable development (FAO, 2022).

2.6. Local Food Products

__DESCRIPTION

São Tomé e Príncipe's food system blends local tradition with high import dependence

The food culture of São Tomé e Príncipe is strongly influenced by its geography, colonial history, and reliance on imports. The **staple diet of the São Toméan population is based on local agricultural products** such as banana, cassava, breadfruit, yam, maize, beans, coconut, and a variety of tropical fruits. **Fresh fish, sourced from artisanal fishing**, is the main source of animal protein in the daily diet. The consumption of the **Giant African Snail** (*Lissachatina fulica*), an invasive species native to East Africa, is widespread, especially in rural areas, and it is also a significant source of protein.

Many of the plants consumed daily in the country were introduced during the colonial period. **Coffee and cocoa** — the backbone of the São Toméan economy — originated in the Americas; **banana and oil palm trees** are native to, or were adapted from, Africa or the Americas; **coconut trees** originated in the Americas or Asia; while **mango, jackfruit, and pepper** have Asian origins. **Yam** comes from either Africa or Asia, and **vanilla** was introduced from the Americas (Aguiar, 2002; Henriques and Carvalho, 2019).

Despite its rich biodiversity and agricultural potential, São Tomé e Príncipe faces structural limitations that undermine its food security. Studies indicate that **more than 84% of the country's population faces food insecurity**, with limited access to healthy and balanced nutrition. **Local food production is insufficient to meet demand**, making the country heavily reliant on imports of staples such as rice, vegetable oil, wheat, and powdered milk. Estimates suggest that **up to 66% of its food needs are met through imports**, leaving it highly vulnerable to global price shocks (FAO, 2019).

Since the 1990s, local food production—particularly vegetables—has increased, driven by land redistribution and international cooperation projects. The government, in collaboration with international organizations such as the FAO, has implemented various programs to promote food security. One example is the **National School Feeding and Health Programme (PNASE)**, launched in 2012, which aims to provide nutritious school meals and support local food production. In 2023, the PNASE was further strengthened with the

Palaiês at the Fish Market, São Tomé Island
Photo: Cultivar Project, 2025

approval of Law No. 01/2023, which establishes the legal framework for school feeding in the country.

Despite this progress, approximately 95% of cereals and 75% of meat consumed in the country are still imported. In contrast, local production meets nearly all demand for fruit and covers a significant share of vegetable consumption (Neves, 2022). On the other hand, the rearing of animals such as poultry, pigs, and small ruminants is still largely aimed at subsistence, and the number of cattle remains very low.

While the economy is dominated by **export-oriented agriculture — primarily cocoa, but also palm oil**, **chocolate**, **black pepper and coffee** (INE, 2025), as well as **coconuts** and coconut pulp, **kernels**, **cinnamon** and **vanilla** — subsistence farming remains underfunded and underdeveloped, perpetuating food insecurity. Weak distribution systems, non-functioning existing cold chambers, inadequate preservation infrastructure, and ineffective public policies further contribute to **post-harvest losses and waste**. Additionally, horticultural production faces climatic challenges that hinder the continuous supply of food, leading many farmers to use chemical fertilisers and pesticides to sustain production, which may raise **concerns regarding food safety**.

Moreover, food-related health concerns are growing, especially among the youth. Extreme poverty and the lack of nutrition policies have been linked to risky dietary behaviours, including the consumption of locally made alcoholic drinks that may contain harmful heavy metals (De Santiago *et al*., 2020).

Bôbô Forro Market, São Tomé Island
Photo: Cultivar Project, 2025

The **gastronomy** of São Tomé e Príncipe is rooted in a Creole tradition, prized for its **authenticity and high nutritional value**, thanks to the use of a wide variety of vegetables and fruit. Fish and seafood—including lobster, crab, whelk, and octopus—are fundamental components of the local diet. **Traditional dishes** include *calulú* (a stew of fish or smoked meat with vegetables like okra, spinach, eggplant, tomato and palm oil), the local *feijoada* (typically prepared with white beans and fish), country-style omelette, *izaquente*, *molho fogo*, *Ijogó, blábláá, azagoa, mbelela, fungi maguita, lússua, kisaca* and *cachupa* (a corn-and-bean stew).

The country's rich biodiversity includes **plants traditionally used in medicine and cuisine**, such as micocó leaves, chalela, yam, vanilla, and turmeric. Among these, species like *Vernonia amygdalina* (libô) and *Piper umbellatum* (fiá-boba) are not only valued for their therapeutic properties, but also feature in traditional Santomean dishes such as *calulú* and *calu-plétu* (Madureira, 2012)

Cocoa and coffee have increasingly become important sectors in organic production, using agroecological systems

__ANALYSIS

During the colonial period, the roças in São Tomé e Príncipe were the center of the economy, mainly due to cocoa production. Agriculture was dominated by large plantations, which were essential both for the economy and the social organization of the island. After independence in 1975, the government took control of these plantations but faced difficulties in maintaining stable production. Over time, some of these roças fell into decay, especially after the

CULTIVAR Project n. 101179293
Co-funded by the European Union

privatization of large estates in the 1990s, leading to some plantations being abandoned or degraded over the years (Keese, 2011).

Marked by widespread neglect and abandonment, the roças remain a reflection of São Tomé e Príncipe's persistent economic and structural challenges. Despite this, recent decades have witnessed **efforts to revitalise the agricultural sector**, and São Tomé e Príncipe has been making **significant progress in promoting agroecology**, gaining international recognition for its efforts.

The government, international organisations, and private investors have supported the shift towards more sustainable and organic production, particularly in cocoa (including local transformation into high-quality chocolate), coffee, and pepper value chains, through the promotion of agroecological practices and the use of geographical indications to enhance product value. However, progress remains uneven, with challenges such as low technical qualifications among producers and the continued reliance on rudimentary methods.

Between approximately 24% and 63% of São Tomé e Príncipe's economically active population is employed in plantation agriculture, either through formal or informal work (Democratic Republic of São Tomé e Príncipe, 2021a).

Cocoa fruit storage in Roça Diogo Vaz, São Tomé Island
Photo: Cultivar Project, 2025

In terms of **organic cocoa production**, the **CECAB** and **CECAQ11 cooperatives play a central role**. Both are responsible for a large number of producers and have been crucial in the organisation and certification of production. CECAB (Cooperative for the Production and Export of Organic Cocoa), founded in 2004, is the country's largest cooperative, gathering around

3,000 farmers organised into 42 associations. The cooperative produces certified organic cocoa and exports it to the French company Kaoka. **In 2022, CECAB opened a chocolate factory** in Guadalupe, with a projected capacity of 10 tonnes per year. CECAQ11 (Cooperative for the Export of Quality Cocoa 11), established in 2011, consists of 1,135 producers. Both cooperatives promote training for technicians and farmers to ensure quality standards are maintained.

Brands of chocolates produced in São Tomé e Príncipe
Photo: Cultivar Project, 2025

Both cooperatives face challenges related to low productivity, lack of motivation among young producers, and price instability in the international market. However, there is a growing perception that São Tomé e Príncipe produces the "best cocoa in the world," which could be leveraged through a Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) to enhance the product's value and improve international competitiveness (Prazeres and Lucas, 2020).

In addition to the cooperatives, other initiatives and actors in the sector, such as private producers and smaller cooperatives like Satocao – a cocoa company founded with Swiss support – are also contributing. **National chocolate production has been on the rise**, with some of the most well-known brands including: **Claudio Corallo**, an Italian agronomist who acquired the Roça Terreiro Velho on Príncipe Island in 1995 and began producing high-quality cocoa; **Diogo Vaz**; and **HBD** (Here Be Dragons), a company that revitalised the Roça Sundy on Príncipe Island.

Coffee beans dryer
Photo: Cultivar Project, 2025

The Monte Café region, historically significant for **coffee production** in São Tomé e Príncipe, experienced a decline following the country's independence in 1975. However, the **CECAFEB (Organic Coffee Export Cooperative)**, established in 2010, **has sought to revitalise organic coffee production** by uniting about 500 small-scale farmers organised into associations.

In São Tomé e Príncipe, organic coffee plantations based on agroforestry systems are predominant, and CECAFEB has experienced substantial growth through the expansion of the domestic market. Within the cooperative, *Coffea arabica* L. and *C. canephora* Pierre ex A. Froehner (Robusta) are cultivated across approximately 560 hectares, with 552 farmers producing an estimated 86,300 kg of cherries, valued at €48,328 during the 2018/2019 harvest (CECAFEB, 2020).

Despite the efforts of CECAFEB to promote organic coffee and enhance the added value of the product, **the cooperative faces challenges such as low production volumes, supply issues, and limited market knowledge**. Organic coffee is highly regarded, particularly by tourists and environmentally conscious consumers. Certification as organic is an important attribute in the choice of coffee, but many consumers remain unfamiliar with the brand.

CECAFEB still has a limited number of national customers, and its market presence is especially restricted on the island of Príncipe. Despite this, the cooperative's coffee represents a significant share of national consumption, with approximately 2,984 kg sold annually. The cooperative also faces considerable competition from both international and local brands, with

consumer preferences varying based on price, quality, and product availability (Salvador and Lucas, 2020).

Initially focused on Arabica coffee, CECAFEB has also expanded into Robusta, catering to both local and international markets. While struggling to increase production volume, the cooperative has made efforts to improve the quality and added value of its coffee, aiming to broaden its global market presence.

Storage of cocoa beans at Roça Diogo Vaz
Photo: Cultivar Project, 2025

In recent years, Arabica coffee production has declined due to the **abandonment of coffee plantations in favour of conventional horticulture** in the Roça Monte Café area (Faisandier, 2019), as well as irregular flowering throughout the year and phytosanitary issues (Carvalho *et al*., 2021, 2023)

In addition to CECAFEB, **other producers and intermediaries** also engage in coffee trade, though the overall national production **remains relatively modest**.

Faced with the current volatility of global coffee prices, if São Tomé were able to significantly increase its coffee production, it could unlock substantial economic and social benefits. This strategy would not only improve the financial resilience of local farmers but also strengthen São Tomé's position as a trusted origin for premium coffee.

Support for agricultural export value chains has been strengthened

São Tomé e Príncipe has an agricultural sector strongly characterised by the production of export-oriented crops, with **cocoa and coffee holding historical prominence**, and pepper gaining significance more recently. These value chains play a central role in the country's economy, contributing substantially to

export revenues and supporting the livelihoods of thousands of rural families. However, they face **several challenges**, including **low productivity**, **weak producer organisation**, **inadequate infrastructure**, and **limited access to higher-value markets**.

In response to these challenges, targeted support initiatives have been developed to strengthen the sector. One **particularly impactful example is the PAFAE Project – *Support for Agricultural Export Value Chains* (2021–2025)**, implemented by IMVF – Instituto Marquês de Valle Flôr, in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Fisheries of São Tomé e Príncipe, and co-financed by the European Union and Camões – Institute for Cooperation and Language, I.P.

The project provided **technical support to producers**, promoting good agricultural practices and capacity building for the cultivation of export crops such as **cocoa, coffee, pepper, and coconut**. It also contributed to the **strengthening of organisation and governance** within the value chains, through support to cooperatives and producer associations. Efforts were made to **enhance product quality**, with a focus on certification (organic, fair trade) and positioning in international markets. The project invested in **agricultural infrastructure and logistics**, directly reducing post-harvest losses and improving market access. **Additionally, it promoted horticulture for domestic consumption**, as a way to improve local nutrition and diversify the income of farming households. The initiative targets several categories of direct beneficiaries: 3,000 producers; 15 **rural entrepreneurs**; 5 **cooperatives and** 85 **producer associations**;

Cocoa beans dryer
Photo: Cultivar Project, 2025

40 **technical staff from government institutions** such as the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Rural Development (MAPDR), the Rural Development Support Centre (CADR), and the Agronomic and Technological Research Centre (CIAT); as well as 500 people through socio-community activities.

PAFAE has provided technical assistance, financial resources, and infrastructure, including fermentation units, drying systems, and storage facilities. The project has also developed tools to add value to local products, such as a **Cocoa Sensory Guide**, helping to position Santomean cocoa more competitively on the international market. PAFAE has also **invested in renewable energy infrastructure**, such as photovoltaic systems, to support agricultural research and services. Additionally, it **published the book *"Agroecological Best Practices in São Tomé e Príncipe"***, which documents technical knowledge and field experience on four key export crops: cocoa, coffee,

Chilli pepper branch in Roça Diogo Vaz, São Tomé Island
Photo: Cultivar Project, 2025

Vanilla plant in Roça Diogo Vaz, São Tomé Island
Photo: Cultivar Project, 2025

Cocoa fruit
Photo: Cultivar Project, 2025

pepper, and coconut. For the first time, a single technical manual systematically compiles the country's accumulated expertise in agroforestry-based production of these value chains.

The overarching objective is to **strengthen the national economy and generate employment** through a more robust, inclusive, and competitive agricultural export sector. Specifically, the project seeks to build the capacity of sector actors to sustainably improve both the quality and quantity of production, while also **enhancing access to international markets and increasing the visibility of São Toméan products abroad**.

CONCLUSION__

Promoting geographical indications for local agricultural products appears to be a promising path forward

Today, São Tomé e Príncipe seeks sustainable development by leveraging its unique agro-ecological and cultural heritage. Initiatives such as promoting geographical indications for local agricultural products are seen as promising paths forward. **Geographical Indications (GIs) could link the agricultural products to specific territories, preserving traditional agricultural practices while improving their economic value**. However, the implementation of GIs in STP faces challenges related to infrastructure, skilled labour, and institutional support. GIs could also promote eco-tourism by leveraging the country's rich biodiversity and agricultural heritage, making it an attractive destination for

tourists interested in sustainable and authentic experiences (Narciso *et al.*, 2020).

The creation of a **Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) for "São Tomé Cocoa"** is seen as a key strategy to increase its value, enhance competitiveness, and protect the product from fraud and unfair competition. Indeed, **the request for PGI registration was submitted to the European Union in 2024**, with its implementation supported by the PAFAE project. This initiative also promoted the creation and marketing of value-added products, particularly by highlighting the unique organoleptic qualities of São Tomé's cocoa. According to the information available on the eAmbrosia website, the registration has **not yet been approved**.

Cocoa Agroforestry System, in Roça Diogo Vaz, São Tomé Island
Photo: Cultivar Project, 2025

In a similar vein, the recent **recognition of the *Cocoa Agroforestry System in São Tomé e Príncipe* as a *Globally Important Agricultural Heritage System* (GIAHS) in 2024** further highlights the importance of the region's cocoa production, particularly the unique Amelonado Seleção de São Tomé (SST) variety, which is the only fine cocoa variety of its kind in the world. This sustainable agroforestry system not only contributes to the global chocolate industry but also supports the local communities by integrating a variety of crops, such as bananas, breadfruit, and taro (locally known as matabala), which ensure both food security and economic stability. The multi-layered structure of the system enhances ecological balance by improving soil fertility, reducing the need for chemical inputs, and supporting environmental conservation.

Cocoa plant nurserys in Roça Diogo Vaz, São Tomé Island
Photo: Cultivar Project, 2025

The Cocoa Agroforestry System of Sao Tome and Principe, developed during Portuguese colonization, has been shaped by the traditional knowledge of local communities over generations. Over time, the system has evolved from a monoculture to a **diversified approach, combining cocoa with nitrogen-fixing trees and other crops**. **This diversification increases resilience against environmental stresses and market fluctuations**. Moreover, the agroforestry system promotes social equity through cooperatives, empowering local farmers, preserving cultural heritage, and fostering sustainable development. The region's landscapes and waterscapes also play a crucial role in supporting biodiversity, water management, and long-term sustainability, making this agroforestry system a model for balancing agriculture with environmental conservation.

The agricultural sector still needs to overcome serious constraints

The agricultural system of São Tomé e Príncipe faces significant challenges that hinder its sustainable development.

The **lack of adequate infrastructure**, such as roads, storage, and processing facilities, **results in high post-harvest losses** and makes it difficult to access markets. It is essential to invest in transport infrastructure and storage centres to reduce losses and improve product quality.

Productivity is another concern, as most of the production still relies on traditional practices. The introduction of modern technologies and technical training for farmers is essential to increase efficiency and competitiveness.

Although **chocolate production** from cocoa already exists, it is **still limited**, and most of the production continues to be exported as raw material. Encouraging local processing and value addition could generate local employment and increase competitiveness in the global market.

Furthermore, **access to credit is restricted**, making it difficult to invest in the agricultural sector. Facilitating access to finance and promoting cooperative organisation can improve farmers' ability to invest and negotiate better terms.

CECAB's cocoa warehouse
Photo: Cultivar Project, 2025

In summary, to **overcome these difficulties**, it **is crucial** to improve infrastructure, train producers, and promote local processing of agricultural products to strengthen the agricultural economy and diversify income sources.

A series of **recommendations** have been made to improve São Tomé e Príncipe's agricultural sector, including **strengthening climate resilience** (water collection, agroforestry, soil conservation), formulating a **new national agricultural policy**, improving **land registration**, supporting **innovation**, and **integrating the private sector into the production chains** (Arias *et al*., 2019)

The **Centre for Agronomic and Technological Research (CIAT)**, São Tomé e Príncipe's national institution for agricultural research and innovation, **could play a key role in driving these improvements** by fostering sustainable practices and strengthening the country's food systems.

CULTIVAR Project n. 101179293
Co-funded by the European Union

Quality analysis of cocoa at CIAT (Agronomic and Technological Research Centre of São Tomé e Príncipe). Photo: Cultivar Project, 2025

CIAT works to improve farming techniques, increase crop productivity, and support local communities in adopting more sustainable methods. Guided by its **2024–2026 Strategic Plan**, the centre focuses on resilient and community-based development, promoting agroforestry systems and boosting the cultivation of key crops such as cassava, sweet potatoes, legumes, matabala, and vegetables. Research at the BECI and BECAF stations also explores bananas, turmeric, ginger, and fruit barriers, while germplasm banks are being established for crops like coffee.

Food security remains a central mission. Through research on local crops and support for improved agricultural practices, CIAT helps farmers increase yields and reduce dependence on imports. It also **ensures food safety** through phytosanitary inspections at ports and lab testing for pesticide residues, water quality, and nutritional profiles of local foods.

The centre **supports small-scale farmers with training and technical assistance**, while its labs offer vital services in soil analysis, crop diagnostics, and pest control. In promoting eco-friendly agriculture, CIAT develops biopesticides and biofungicides through its plant pathology and entomology labs.

CIAT also plays a key role in **enhancing the quality of cocoa**—one of the nation's main exports—by promoting good practices in cultivation and post-harvest processing. With a focus on institutional quality, the centre conducts regular audits and strengthens lab planning to ensure consistent research and adherence to international standards.

Through its combined efforts in **research, regulation, and field support**, CIAT is helping to build a more productive, safe, and sustainable agricultural sector in São Tomé e Príncipe.

São Tomé e Príncipe faces challenges in consolidating a sustainable fishing system

Fishing is a vital activity for the coastal communities of São Tomé e Príncipe, directly employing around 4,370 people, with approximately 97% engaged in artisanal fishing. Additionally, around 1,712 **women**, known as ***palaiês***, **work as fish vendors**. In 2023, the country had 2,741 artisanal fishing boats and 15 semi-industrial vessels, which are fiberglass-built, have a capacity of 0.5 to 15 tons, and are equipped with engines for increased autonomy (Porriños *et al*., 2023). **Artisanal fishing, primarily conducted with traditional canoes**, focuses on coastal pelagic fish like tuna, grouper, snapper, and mackerel. However, it faces significant challenges, including the lack of onboard preservation infrastructure and technical resources, limiting its efficiency and sustainability. Semi-industrial fishing, using larger motorized vessels with ice preservation systems, allows for longer operations and larger catches but struggles with frequent breakdowns and poor maintenance, affecting its performance (Porriños *et al*., 2023).

Traditional Sailing Canoe, North coast of São Tomé Island.
Photo: Wlodzimierz Józef Szymaniak, Cultivar Project, 2025

Regarding **industrial fishing**, São Tomé e Príncipe has established **agreements with the European Union and the Association of Large Freezing Tuna Vessels** (AGAC). In 2023, foreign vessels caught approximately 6,581 tons of

Fish sales at the Fish Market, São Tomé Island
Photo: Cultivar Project, 2025

fish, mostly tuna, for export. **However, these agreements have faced criticism**, as the country lacks the infrastructure to effectively monitor fishing activities. There is also concern about the over-exploitation of fishery resources due to inadequate control (Gomes *et al*., 2024).

In terms of management and sustainability, **São Tomé e Príncipe approved its first National Strategic Plan for Fisheries and Aquaculture (2024–2034) in 2024**, aiming for sustainable resource management, with a focus on artisanal, semi-industrial, and industrial fishing, as well as aquaculture promotion.

Although the fishing sector in São Tomé e Príncipe has several initiatives aimed at sustainability, it still faces significant challenges, such as the lack of updated fish stock data, the absence of species-specific management plans, and difficulties in enforcement, particularly regarding industrial fishing, which often occurs in a predatory manner, as well as illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing (Porriños *et al*., 2023; Gomes *et al*., 2024).

It is essential to improve the training of fishermen, better organize the production and marketing chain, and educate the population to avoid illegal and unsustainable fishing practices (Gomes *et al*., 2024).

Additionally, the adoption of the **National Blue Economy Transition Plan** in 2019 established a strategic framework aimed at **integrating public policies within the artisanal fisheries sector**. Key objectives of the plan include the **modernisation of the coastal fishing fleet**, the **strengthening of marine resource management**, and the **creation of resilient livelihoods that respect ocean ecosystems**. Among the priority projects is the enhancement of artisanal

coastal fishing through improved safety conditions, modernised equipment, and expanded market access (World Bank, 2024). The plan also proposes the modernisation of the artisanal fishing fleet, replacing traditional canoes with safe and sustainable vessels. This measure could directly benefit between 600 to 900 fishermen, with a highly significant internal rate of return (IRR) of 30% (FAO, 2022).


Santo Antão
São Vicente
Santa Luzia
São Nicolau
Sal
Boa Vista
Cabo Verde
Santiago
Maio
Fogo
Brava

3. CABO VERDE

3.1. Geographical Location and Historical Overview

Cabo Verde is a **volcanic island nation located in the eastern Atlantic Ocean, approximately 600 km west of mainland Africa**. The archipelago comprises **ten main islands** and several islets, divided into two groups: *Barlavento* (windward) and *Sotavento* (leeward). These islands emerged between 20 and 40 million years ago through intraplate volcanism along the Cabo Verde Rise and have never been geologically connected to the African mainland. This long-standing isolation has contributed to the **archipelago's exceptional geological and ecological distinctiveness** (Ramalho, 2011).

The islands experience an **arid to semi-arid tropical climate**, with annual rainfall typically below 300 mm, concentrated mainly between August and October. While flat lower-lying islands such as Sal and Boa Vista are largely desert-like, the mountainous islands—particularly Santo Antão, Fogo, and Santiago—feature more humid microclimates that support terraced agriculture and remnants of montane forest ecosystems (Heckman, 1985; Lindskog and Delaite, 1996).

Islands of Cabo Verde
Santo Antão
São Vicente
Santa Luzia (uninhabited nature reserve)
São Nicolau
Sal
Boa Vista
Maio
Santiago
Fogo
Brava

Despite these climatic constraints, **Cabo Verde boasts a remarkable biodiversity**. The archipelago is home to more than 660 species of vascular plants, over 80 of which are endemic—including *Aeonium gorgoneum* and *Campanula jacobaea*. Several endemic reptile species also inhabit the islands, and the surrounding marine environments provide nesting grounds for endangered sea turtles and habitats for rare bird species such as the Cabo Verde kite (*Milvus fasciicauda*) (Canalejo *et al*., 2012; Romeiras *et al.*, 2015).

The islands were uninhabited until the arrival of Portuguese navigators in 1460. The **first permanent European settlement in sub-Saharan Africa**, **Ribeira Grande** (Cidade Velha), was **established in 1462**. Cabo Verde soon became a **strategic node in the transatlantic slave trade**, serving as both a plantation economy and a maritime hub. The islands developed through a model of colonial settlement rooted in slavery and transcontinental commerce, with their strategic geographic position making them a key platform in the Portuguese transatlantic slave trade—both as **a redistribution hub and a logistical link between Africa, the Americas, and Europe**—ultimately **giving**

rise to a Creole society shaped by deep racial and cultural mixing (Santos, 2007).

During the **19th century, the rise of Mindelo** as a coal refuelling station transformed the city, located on the island of São Vicente, **into a key international port**. The expansion of Porto Grande reshaped the island's economic and social landscape between 1850 and 1880, drawing steamships and labor migrants from across the Atlantic and repositioning the country's political and economic center away from Santiago Island as early as 1838 (Correia e Silva, 2005).

Cabo Verde gained independence peacefully in 1975, following the 1974 Carnation Revolution in Portugal. In post-independence, Cabo Verde adopted a one-party system. Growing public demand for political openness led to constitutional **reforms and the introduction of multi-party elections in 1990, positioning Cabo Verde as one of Africa's most stable democracies** (Sanches, 2013; Oxford Research Encyclopedia, 2024).

Since independence, Cabo Verde has developed into a stable multiparty democracy with a robust national **identity grounded in Creole heritage**, musical expressions such as *morna* and *batuque*, and strong transnational ties with its diaspora (Batalha and Carling, 2008). This identity reflects centuries of cultural fusion between African and Portuguese influences, shaped by historical processes of

São Vicente Island overlooking Santo Antão Island, Cabo Verde
Photo: Cultivar Project, 2025

creolisation, diaspora circulation, and a shared attachment to language, music, and collective resilience—making the archipelago one of the most culturally distinctive nations in the Atlantic world.

The formation of **Cabo Verdean identity is deeply rooted in the dynamics of cultural blending and symbolic resistance to colonial rule** (Fernandes, 2006). Creolisation functioned not only as a form of cultural adaptation, but also as a creative means of subverting-imposed structures. Within the Portuguese colonial context—particularly in Cabo Verde—local communities developed hybrid cultural practices through language, religion, music, and social customs. These became key vehicles of everyday resistance and later emerged as central pillars of national affirmation in the post-independence era (Gomes and Évora, 2023).

Cabo Verde
Location: Western Africa Total Land Area: 4033 km Coastline: 965km Climate: Arid and Semi-arid Average annual temperatures: 21°C to 28°C Rainfall: annual average of approximately 208,68 mm Capital: Praia (Ilha de Santiago) Estimated population: 491.233 inhabitants (INE, Censos 2021) Population density: 120,3 inhabitants per km2 (Estimated value for 2024) Location: Latitude: 14.9208 - Longitude: -23.5083 Highest points: Topo da Coroa (Santo Antão Island) - 1600m Pico da Antónia (Santiago Island), 1819m Pico do Fogo (Fogo Island), 2819m

3.2. Social Environment and Economy

Cabo Verde has a service-oriented and resilient small-island economy relying heavily on **tourism, diaspora remittances, and public services**.

In 2023, nominal GDP reached approximately US $2.77 billion, marking a record high for the country (FRED, 2024; Trading Economics, 2024). Real GDP growth was 5.5% in 2023, projected to continue at 6.0% in 2024 and 5.0% in 2025 driven by tourism and service sectors (IMF, 2025). The World Bank concurs with

Mindelo city, in São Vicente Island, Cabo Verde
Photo: Cultivar Project, 2025

these figures—5.1% growth in 2023, increasing to 5.9% in 2025—supported by low-cost air travel and Blue Economy investments (World Bank, 2024; 2025).

Inflation has been managed effectively, dropping from 3.7% in 2023 to 1% in 2024, and forecast at around 2% in 2025, benefiting from stable energy prices (World Bank, 2024).

Unemployment stood at 10.3% in 2023 and 8% in 2024, reflecting strong recovery in tourism, services, and infrastructure sectors (Ecofin Agency, 2024). However, youth unemployment (ages 15-24) remains high, at 28.76% in 2023 (FRED, 2023).

Absolute poverty declined from 35.5% in 2015 to 24.75% in 2023 (INE, 2024). Rural poverty remains significantly higher than in urban areas, affecting approximately 35% of the rural population compared to 21.31% in urban settings (INE, 2024). In 2022, an ambitious programme to eradicate extreme poverty was launched: the **National Strategy for the Eradication of Extreme Poverty** (**ENEP 2022–2026**).

The **life expectancy in Cabo Verde in 2025 is 76.4 years**, with a difference between genders: 79.5 years for women and 73.3 years for men (Worldometer, 2025).

Remittances remain a vital source of external finance. Cape Verde recorded remittances equal to ~14.4% of GDP in 2020, one of the highest rates globally, with consistent increases during crises such as COVID-19 (World Bank, 2024).

Emigration continues to shape the nation's demography. Over one million Cabo Verdeans live abroad, outnumbering the country's residents. While no very recent official figures are provided here, Cabo Verdeans form large

communities in Portugal (~260,000), the USA (~500,000), and other countries (Migration Data Portal, 2024).

Income inequality remains high, with a Gini index around 50.9 in 2019—notably elevated compared to African norms (World Economics, 2025).

Cabo Verde achieved an HDI of 0.668 in 2023, classified in the **medium human development tier**—significantly ahead of the Sub-Saharan African average (UNDP, 2025).

In response to socio-economic and environmental challenges, **Cabo Verde has reaffirmed its commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**, aligning with global efforts to eradicate poverty, promote inclusive growth, and ensure sustainability.

Thanks to the decentralisation process launched in 1991, **municipalities have become central actors in localising the SDGs**, with key priorities including no poverty (SDG 1), clean water and sanitation (SDG 6), sustainable cities (SDG 11), and partnerships (SDG 17), followed by gender equality (**SDG 5**), good health and well-being (**SDG 3**), quality education (**SDG 4**), decent work and economic growth (**SDG 8**) (ANMCV, 2021). However, they face **major constraints**, including **financial fragility**, **limited human resources**, and **weak private sector involvement**. Centralised public policies continue to limit their autonomy and access to international funding. **Poor coordination among institutions** and the lack of local-level data further hinder effective SDG implementation and monitoring.

The **United Nations Annual Report for Cabo Verde (2024)** identifies **further obstacles** to sustainable development, including **structural difficulties** such as a high dependency on donors, fragmented interventions, and limited

Praia city, in Santiago Island, Cabo Verde
Photo: Cultivar Project, 2025

institutional capacity for partnership building and communication. **Social and territorial inequalities persist**, particularly among municipalities and vulnerable groups. In terms of governance, delays in adopting key legal and strategic frameworks and **gaps in monitoring and evaluation systems** undermine evidence-based policymaking. In the social sector, **gender inequalities remain**, **school dropout rates** among boys are high, and **social protection coverage is still insufficient**, despite some progress. **Public health has been tested by disease outbreaks** such as dengue, revealing weaknesses in infrastructure and response systems.

Economically, **youth emigration affects essential sectors**, while **limited access to technology and digital training** constrains the benefits of digital transformation. On the environmental front, progress in **climate action and ecosystem conservation is slow**, largely due to low technical capacity and insufficient community engagement. Finally, the justice sector struggles with institutional and operational limitations, including delays in legal processes and the **need to align structures with international human rights standards**, which highlights the urgency of improving legal protection and civic inclusion (United Nations in Cabo Verde, 2024).

There are also **other economic constraints**. **Public debt** declined from 145% of GDP in 2020 to around 120% in 2023, but it **remains high** and constitutes a significant vulnerability. **Cabo Verde remains highly exposed to external shocks** — including tourism volatility, rising energy and food prices, and climate-related risks. The **Cabo Verdean private sector** is dominated by micro-enterprises **with low productive capacity**, limited access to credit, and poor digital integration. **Electricity, inter-island logistics, and transport costs are among the highest in Africa**, undermining business competitiveness and discouraging private investment (World Bank, 2023)

3.3. Cultural Heritage

Cabo Verde has been strengthening its legal and institutional framework for the protection of cultural heritage

__DESCRIPTION

Cabo Verde's legal framework for cultural heritage protection is anchored in both constitutional and statutory provisions. Article 79(3)(c) of the Constitution obliges the State to "promote the safeguarding and enhancement of cultural, historical and architectural heritage".

The Foundations of Cultural Heritage Law (Law No. 102/III/90 of 29 December) initially established a legal basis for preserving and defending national cultural resources. This was succeeded by the Instituto da Investigação e do Património Cultural (IIPC) via Decree-Regulation No. 2/2004, which consolidated heritage responsibilities. To further empower heritage governance, **Decree-Regulation No. 26/2014 created the Instituto do Património Cultural (IPC)** with a renewed mandate to identify, inventory, research, preserve, defend, and promote both tangible and intangible heritage. In January 2020, this statute was updated and replaced by **Decree-Regulation No. 3/2020, reaffirming the IPC's autonomy and purpose**. Complementing institutional frameworks, the **Legal Regime for the Protection and Valorisation of Cultural Heritage (Law No. 85/IX/2020 of 20 April) provides a comprehensive legal structure**. It defines protected assets—ranging from historic buildings and archaeological sites to intangible traditions—and establishes principles, responsibilities, public–private contractualisation, civic participation, and legal safeguards, including both penal and administrative sanctions

The **Instituto do Património Cultural (IPC)** of Cabo Verde, currently **operating under the Ministry of Culture and Creative Industries**, **plays a central role in safeguarding and promoting the country's cultural heritage**. As a public institution with administrative and financial autonomy, the IPC is entrusted with a broad mandate encompassing the **identification, inventory, research, preservation, and dissemination of Cabo Verdean cultural assets—both tangible and intangible, mobile and immobile**. Its key responsibilities include the protection and valorisation of cultural heritage, ensuring equal access for all citizens, and advancing knowledge of national identity through research in fields such as history, sociology, anthropology, linguistics, museology, archaeology, and musicology. The IPC also promotes the classification and legal

protection of cultural properties and archaeological sites and provides technical advice and assessments regarding public or private projects that may affect heritage assets. In cases where cultural assets are at risk of deterioration, damage, or loss, the IPC has the authority to determine urgent preventive or conservation measures. It also plays a regulatory role by issuing opinions on development plans or interventions affecting protected buildings, monuments, historic sites, or expressions of intangible cultural heritage. To carry out its mission, the IPC coordinates and supports a wide range of cultural activities. These include the financing and development of cultural research projects, the promotion of scientific and cultural exchange programmes with national and international institutions, and the collection, treatment, and publication of cultural data and studies. Additionally, the IPC may propose the creation and management of museums or museological spaces, reinforcing its role in cultural education and heritage transmission.

Through these multifaceted functions, the IPC ensures the preservation of Cabo Verde's diverse cultural expressions while contributing to sustainable development, cultural diplomacy, and the strengthening of national identity.

In recent years, **Cabo Verde has increasingly recognised the value of monuments, historic centres, heritage villages, and intangible cultural heritage as essential elements** of territorial identity, cultural continuity, and sustainable tourism. This growing awareness has been reflected in **a series of official classification efforts that strengthen the national and local heritage protection framework**.

A notable example is the **official designation of the village of Fontainhas**, on the island of Santo Antão, **as National Cultural and Natural Heritage**, through **Portaria No. 34/2024**. This legal act safeguards the village's striking landscape, traditional architecture, and strong community identity. It was followed by the

registration of "Fongo"—a traditional local dish and culinary practice—as Intangible Cultural Heritage of Fontainhas by the Instituto do Património Cultural (IPC), further reinforcing the cultural significance of the area.

In April 2024, the government also issued **Portaria No. 9/2024**, **officially recognising Funaná**—a vibrant musical genre rooted in the island of Santiago—**as Intangible Cultural Heritage of Cabo Verde**, acknowledging its importance in the daily cultural expressions of the population.

Funaná - the singer Bino Branco from the band Ferro Gaita, performing with the musician Vadú. Photo: Wikimedia Commons, 2008, Public Domain

More recently, through **Portaria No. 7/2025**, the **D. Maria Pia Lighthouse in Praia was declared National Cultural Heritage**, highlighting its historical, cultural, and symbolic relevance in both the capital's identity and the country's maritime history.

Additionally, in 2024, **a municipal initiative led to the official recognition of the traditional board game "uril" as Intangible Cultural Heritage of São Vicente**, underscoring the importance of safeguarding locally rooted knowledge and practices.

Maria Pia Lighthouse, in Santiago Island, Cabo Verde
Photo: Alexander Centeio, 2024

At the level of **intangible cultural heritage**, the **National Inventory**, under the responsibility of the IPC, includes **six elements**, according to information recorded in the Periodic Report on the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage submitted to UNESCO in 2023: **Tabanca**, a traditional cultural manifestation combining music, dance, and ritual processions rooted in Afro-Creole heritage and celebrated mainly on Santiago Island; **Morna**, a lyrical and nostalgic musical genre performed with instruments such as guitar, cavaquinho, violin, and piano, and widely recognised as a symbol of Cabo Verdean identity; **Cimboa**, a traditional bowed string instrument historically used in music and storytelling, reflecting African cultural influence and currently undergoing revitalisation; the **St John Festivities** (Festas de São João), held especially in Santo Antão and São Vicente, blending Catholic devotion with music, dance, and community celebrations; **traditional pottery**, a craft mainly carried out by women in rural communities using ancestral techniques to produce utilitarian and decorative clay objects; and the **Three Rhythms Festival** (Festival dos Três Ritmos), a cultural event that celebrates the country's core musical genres—Morna, Coladeira, and Funaná—fostering musical heritage and intergenerational transmission.

These **initiatives illustrate Cabo Verde's deepening commitment to the protection and valorisation of cultural heritage at the national and local level**, contributing to broader objectives of decentralised development, cultural resilience, and heritage-led regeneration.

At the international level, **Cabo Verde has also sought to align** its national policy **with global standards**, becoming a **signatory to several key UNESCO**

CULTIVAR Project n. 101179293
Co-funded by the European Union

conventions, including those for the protection of tangible and intangible cultural heritage, the promotion of cultural diversity, and the safeguarding of underwater cultural heritage. These instruments not only enhance national policy coherence but also strengthen international cooperation and visibility for the country's unique cultural assets.

Cabo Verde UNESCO Conventions Ratified	
Year of Ratification	**UNESCO Convention**
5 October 2022	Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications Concerning Higher Education (2019)
5 October 2022 (Accessed)	Revised Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Certificates, Diplomas, Degrees and Other Academic Qualifications in Higher Education in African States (2014)
5 October 2022	Convention Against Discrimination in Education (1960)
26 May 2021	Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005)
26 March 2019	Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage (2001)
6 January 2016	Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003)
5 June 2008	International Convention Against Doping in Sport (2005)
18 July 2005 (Accession)	Convention on Wetlands of International Importance Especially as Waterfowl Habitat (1971)
3 April 1997 (Accession)	International Convention for the Protection of Performers, Producers of Phonograms and Broadcasting Organizations (1961)
28 April 1988 (Acceptance)	Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972)

The country has a growing and revitalising network of museums and visitable heritage sites

Cabo Verde is experiencing a significant phase of revitalisation in its cultural and heritage landscape, characterised by the expansion and modernisation of its network of museums and heritage sites. At the heart of this transformation is the **Institute of Cultural Heritage** (*Instituto do Património Cultural – IPC*), which **plays a central role in the development, coordination, and rehabilitation of national museums across the country**.

The IPC, through its **Directorate of Museums**, is **responsible for implementing national museum policy** in Cabo Verde. This directorate designs, coordinates and promotes actions aimed at the development of the museum sector across the country. Its overarching goal is to enhance the value of cultural heritage by strengthening the quality, modernisation and attractiveness of museums, while fully integrating them into the country's socio-economic and cultural development.

In **2021**, the approval of a **new Museum Framework Law** and the **creation of the National Museum Network** provided a more structured and coherent foundation for the governance of museums nationwide.

Amilcar Cabral Museum, in Santiago Island, Cabo Verde
Photo: Cultivar Project, 2025

Today, **12 public museums** are **under the direct supervision of the IPC**. However, the *Museus de Cabo Verde* network also includes **other public and private institutions with museum functions**, reflecting the diversity and decentralisation of the sector. These include, for example, the Amílcar Cabral Museum (Santiago), the São Filipe Municipal Museum (Fogo), the Fishing Museum (São Nicolau), and the Coffee Museum of Fogo.

CULTIVAR Project n. 101179293
Co-funded by the European Union

Sea Museum, Mindelo, São Vicente, Island, Cabo Verde
Photo: Cultivar Project, 2025

Over the past years, the **IPC has significantly intensified investment in museum infrastructure**, including the launch of a unified visual identity for the national museum network, which reflects a stronger institutional presence and coherence.

Since 2016, the Government of Cabo Verde has undertaken an **extensive heritage rehabilitation programme**, with visible results across the archipelago. Approximately 50 historic buildings have been restored, with around 30 of these interventions carried out under the PRRA (Programme for Requalification, Rehabilitation and Accessibility).

One of the flagship projects is the *Sea Museum*, located in the restored replica of the Torre de Belém in Mindelo. Originally inaugurated in 2014, the ***Sea Museum* was restructured and reopened in January 2023** following a tripartite agreement between the Ministry of Culture and Creative Industries (through the IPC), the Ministry of the Sea (via the Autonomous Fisheries Fund and the National Directorate of Fisheries and Aquaculture), and the Macaronesian underwater archaeology project "Margullar." The reopening featured a permanent exhibition on underwater archaeology titled "Cabo Verde on Atlantic Routes: A View Through Archaeology," which presents a collection of artefacts recovered from shipwreck exploration around the islands.

In **2021**, the **Tarrafal Concentration Camp Museum** underwent **structural and curatorial upgrades**, significantly improving accessibility and historical interpretation.

Tarrafal Concentration Camp Museum, in Santiago Island, Cabo Verde
Photo: Cultivar Project, 2025

Between 2023 and 2026, the IPC is **implementing a substantial national investment programme focused on museum requalification**, social inclusion and museography sustainability. Significant rehabilitation projects are taking place across various islands.

The **Forte Duque de Bragança** on Ilhéu de Sal Rei (Boa Vista) was fully rehabilitated and opened to the public in June **2023**, featuring interpretive displays that enhance local historical narratives. That same year, the ***Boa Vista Archaeological Museum*** was inaugurated, resulting from the transformation of the island's former customs house. In Santa Cruz, the **Centro Cultural Sema Lopi** was also rehabilitated in 2023.

Spain has emerged as a strategic partner in safeguarding Cabo Verdean cultural heritage, through consistent technical cooperation via AECID (Spanish International Cooperation Agency for Development) and the funding of major structural projects. Notably, Spanish investment supported the enhancement of Cidade Velha – a UNESCO World Heritage Site – and, more recently, the rehabilitation of historic lighthouses, contributing significantly to conservation, integrity and sustainable cultural tourism.

The ***Project for the Valorisation of Cabo Verde's Historic Lighthouses***, financed by Spanish cooperation, is now in an advanced stage and set for completion by

2026. It includes the creation of interpretive centres, tourist routes and guide training. **So far, three lighthouses have been restored**: São José Lighthouse in Porto Inglês (Maio), Dona Maria Pia Lighthouse (Santiago), and Fontes Pereira de Melo Lighthouse (Santo Antão).

Praia Ethnographic Museum, in Santiago Island, Cabo Verde
Photo: Cultivar Project, 2025

These infrastructure efforts are complemented by **cultural programming** and international cooperation. The ***Praia Ethnographic Museum*** has recently hosted **temporary exhibitions** such as "Medicina Tradicional" (2023), highlighting Cabo Verdean traditional medicine, and "Língua KabuVerdianu: Nos Língua Materna" (2025), launched on International Mother Language Day, which explores the historical resilience of Cabo Verdean Creole through audiovisual content, proverbs and educational materials.

Events such as the **2024 National Museums Week**, with educational activities, guided tours, interactive workshops and temporary exhibitions in multiple museums, have aimed to foster stronger community engagement with cultural spaces.

The exhibition and catalogue "**Macaronesia 1975–2025**," featuring visual documents from the Museum of Special Documents and the Photographic Archive, have brought renewed visibility to the archipelago's post-independence cultural journey.

Cathedral of Cidade Velha, in Ribeira Grande de Santiago, in Santiago Island
Photo: Cultivar Project, 2025

Cidade Velha, in Santiago Island, Cabo Verde
Photo: Cultivar Project, 2025

In July 2025, the Government signed a Memorandum of Understanding in Washington to support the establishment of the *Cesária Évora Museum Centre* in São Vicente, further reinforcing global recognition of Cabo Verdean heritage.

Additionally, digital initiatives are underway to create a **comprehensive inventory of the nation's architectural heritage**. Through the "Inventário Nacional do Património Cultural Imóvel," the IPC has developed an **online, geo-referenced database** to document historic buildings, monuments and urban sites. Over 889 entries have already been digitised, each enriched with metadata and historical context. Multimedia content, including architectural drawings and photographs, is also being incorporated. This project strengthens institutional capacity for heritage management, informs policymaking, and fosters public access and awareness.

In addition to these infrastructure efforts, the **IPC announced in July 2025 a new**

phase of eight major restoration projects across the country. Among them is the symbolic **reconnection of Praia Cathedral with the Misericórdia complex**, reinforcing the historic urban fabric of the capital. Other highlights include the **rehabilitation of the *São Filipe Municipal Museum*** (Fogo) through a partnership with Infrastructure of Cabo Verde (ICV), **continued works at the *Norberto Tavares Museum*** (São Vicente), restoration of the **Church of São Roque** (Boa Vista), and the launch of **renovation works at the Palácio da Cultura Ildo Lobo**.

According to statistics from the IPC, the **number of museum visitors in 2024 saw a significant increase**, underscoring the vital role of cultural heritage in the tourism, economic, and social development of communities. A total of 40,000 visitors were recorded, representing an **increase of approximately 20% compared to the previous year**. Among the most visited institutions, the Museum of the Tarrafal Concentration Camp stood out with around 20,000 visitors, followed by the Museum of the Sea, which received approximately 6,000.

Cabo Verdean museums under IPC supervision	
Museum	**Island Location**
Boa Vista Archaeological Museum	Boa Vista Island
Eugénio Tavares House Museum	Brava Island
Sal Museum	Sal Island
Morna Sodade House	São Nicolau Island
Sea Museum	São Vicente Island
Cesária Évora Museum Centre	São Vicente Island
Fonte Lima Pottery Interpretive Centre	Santiago Island
Norberto Tavares Museum	Santiago Island
Praia Ethnographic Museum	Santiago Island
Tarrafal Concentration Camp Museum	Santiago Island
Archaeology Museum	Santiago Island
Tabanca Museum	Santiago Island

ANALYSIS__

International recognition appears to reinforce national efforts to value and protect Cabo Verdean heritage

International **recognition by UNESCO** has increasingly supported national efforts to value and protect Cabo Verde's cultural heritage. The following three cases—the inscription of **Cidade Velha as a World Heritage Site**, the recognition of **Morna as Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity**, and the inclusion of **slavery-related documents in the Memory of the World Register**—stand as **important milestones** that may serve as catalysts for further engagement with heritage preservation and promotion.

Cidade Velha, the historic centre of Ribeira Grande in Cabo Verde, was inscribed as a **UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2009**. It holds outstanding universal value as the first European colonial settlement built in the tropics. Founded in the late 15th century, it marked a decisive step in European expansion towards Africa and the Atlantic. In the 16th and 17th centuries, Ribeira Grande played a central role as a strategic hub in Portuguese colonisation routes and international maritime trade, especially in the links between Africa, the Cape, Brazil, and the Caribbean. Its island location, close to the African mainland, made it a key platform in the Atlantic slave trade. Moreover, Ribeira Grande was a unique site of intercultural encounter, leading to the formation of the first fully developed Creole society. The Ribeira Grande valley was also significant for agricultural experimentation, situated

Cidade Velha, in Santiago Island, Cabo Verde
Photo: Cultivar Project, 2025

between temperate and tropical climates, allowing for the introduction and global dissemination of various plant species.

According to UNESCO, Cidade Velha meets three criteria of Outstanding Universal Value. It reflects the city's strategic role in transcontinental trade and the global circulation of plant species (criterion ii); it bears exceptional witness to the early development of the Atlantic slave trade and the power structures it entailed (criterion iii); and it is closely associated with the birth of Creole culture, whose influence spread across the Atlantic in areas such as art, belief systems, cuisine, and traditional knowledge (criterion vi) (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2009).

In terms of authenticity and integrity, the site is considered satisfactory by UNESCO, though its fragility requires ongoing rehabilitation policies. The site's management system is deemed adequate but in need of legal reinforcement and greater clarity in the operational methods of the newly created

Royal Fortress of São Filipe, in Ribeira Grande de Santiago, in Santiago Island
Photo: Cultivar Project, 2025

Banana Street, in Cidade Velha, in Santiago Island, Cabo Verde
Photo: Cultivar Project, 2025

CULTIVAR Project n. 101179293
Co-funded by the European Union

inter-institutional governance structures (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2009).

In 2019, the "**2019–2022 Management Plan for Cidade Velha, World Heritage Site**" was established. The document forms an integral part of a broader strategy for local and national development, aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Cabo Verde's Strategic Plan for Sustainable Development (PEDS), and the guidelines of the World Heritage Convention (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2019). The plan prioritises the enhancement of both tangible and intangible heritage, the strengthening of community engagement, the promotion of cultural tourism and entrepreneurship, and the positioning of Cidade Velha as a centre for scientific research. To this end, it outlines five strategic axes: community participation, conservation of the historic urban landscape, safeguarding of intangible heritage, development of the creative industries, and heritage promotion and research. It also proposes a participatory governance model with clearly defined responsibilities and mechanisms for continuous monitoring.

In parallel with the management plan, the **IPC developed an Archaeological Charter for Cidade Velha**, further contributing to the site's documentation and protection.

UNESCO inscription has served as a catalyst for a series of conservation and enhancement projects at the site, attracting both technical and financial support at the international level. Among these efforts are the **rehabilitation works at the Forte de São Veríssimo**—including architectural restoration and the development of a museum—alongside **improvements in accessibility and the strengthening of cultural attractions**, **in response to a sharp increase in visitor numbers**, from around 6,000 to nearly 60,000 per year. In parallel, there are initiatives focused on community engagement and cultural entrepreneurship. These combined investments have reinforced heritage preservation, encouraged local participation, and improved access infrastructure, clearly demonstrating the strategic role of UNESCO status in the site's sustainability.

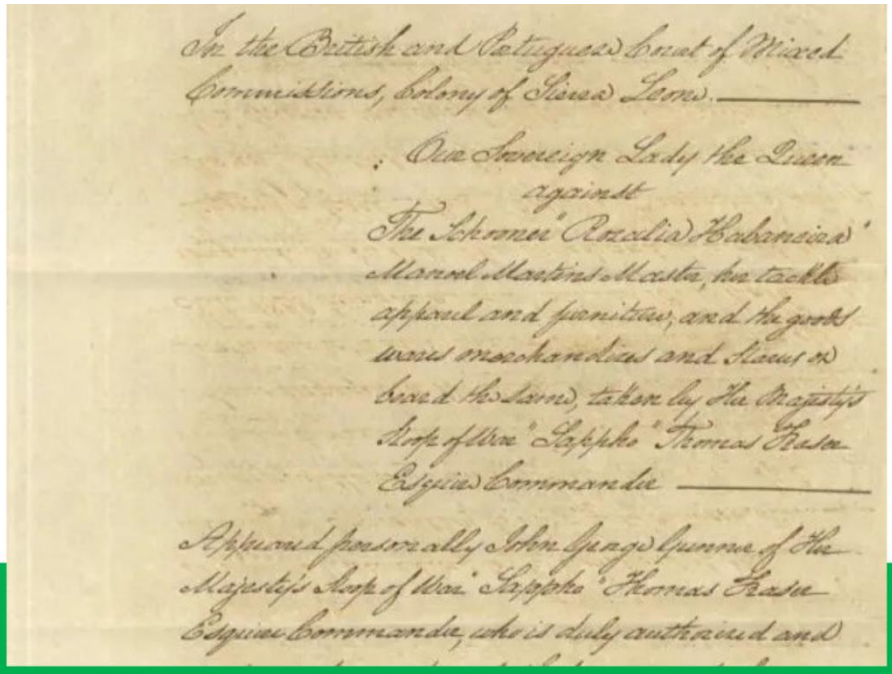
The **2019 UNESCO recognition of *Morna* as Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity** has enhanced its visibility and cultural value, supported its transmission and documentation, and reinforced its role as a symbol of Cabo

Verdean identity. It has also encouraged cultural tourism and created new opportunities for artists, communities, and the preservation of related traditions.

Mural of the Cape Verdean singer Cesária Évora, Cabo Verde
Photo: Cultivar Project, 2025

***Morna* is a traditional musical practice** from Cabo Verde. It combines music, poetry, singing and dance, accompanied by instruments. It can be performed vocally or instrumentally, with a strong emphasis on string instruments such as the guitar, violin, cavaquinho, and more recently, the ukulele. Other instruments like piano, percussion and bass have also been incorporated, though the guitar remains central. Its lyrics—often improvised—address themes such as love, longing (saudade), departure, return, the ocean, and homeland. While today most compositions are in Cabo Verdean Creole, in the past they were also written in Portuguese. Morna is performed by musicians, singers, poets and composers, and is transmitted across generations through performances, workshops, radio programmes, festivals, and music contests such as "Todo Mundo Canta", held across all islands. Some practitioners have also founded dedicated teaching centres. Morna remains a vital part of Cabo Verdean cultural life, present at key social events such as weddings, baptisms and family gatherings (UNESCO, 2019).

The **Periodic Reporting** on the Convention for the Safeguarding of IHC submitted to UNESCO in **2023 highlights that the inscription of *morna*** as Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity **has played a catalytic role in its recognition and safeguarding.** The international recognition strengthened national awareness of *morna*'s cultural significance, increasing its visibility and fostering cultural pride. Following the inscription, several initiatives were implemented, including documentation efforts, training of young musicians,



Documents on Slavery in the Archives of the General Secretariat of the Government (Cabo Verde, 1842-1869), in Cabo Verde National Archives Institute

promotion at festivals, and integration into public cultural policies. These actions contributed to the social recognition of practitioners, intergenerational transmission, and the creation of economic opportunities—particularly in communities historically connected to the genre. The report also emphasises the need for sustained funding, stronger institutional coordination, and active community involvement in safeguarding strategies.

The most recent instance of international recognition awarded to Cabo Verde came in **2025**. Through its **Memory of the World Programme**, **UNESCO officially recognised a significant body of documentary heritage related to slavery in Cabo Verde**. The **project**, entitled "**Documents on Slavery in the Archives of the Secretariat-General of the Government of Cabo Verde (1842–1869)**", was **developed by the National Archives Institute of Cabo Verde**.

The collection consists of manuscripts dated between 1674 and 1954, with particular emphasis on the period from 1803 to 1927. Among the registered items are *Letters of Freedom* issued by the General Government of Cabo Verde in 1858, a book of oaths and minutes from the Luso-British Commission, as well as loose papers, coins, and various other records—all of which have been carefully organised and digitised.

In parallel, a joint submission by Cabo Verde, Angola and Mozambique was also recognised, comprising 79 slave registers produced between 1856 and 1875. These books provide detailed information on enslaved individuals, including names, ages, physical characteristics, places of origin, occupations, and the

names of their enslavers. UNESCO described the collection as an invaluable source, offering rare insight into the historical realities of slavery.
This recognition marks an important milestone for Cabo Verde. It not only brings international visibility to the country's documentary heritage but also reinforces its role in preserving the historical memory of Atlantic slavery. At the same time, it places clear responsibilities on national institutions regarding the preservation and dissemination of these materials. Inclusion in the Memory of the World Register is seen as **a catalyst for further research, improved public access, and the strengthening of cultural identity** and historical awareness. It represents a key step in building a broader and more accessible collective memory.

The country remains committed to preparing new nomination dossiers for UNESCO, with particular focus on the Tarrafal Concentration Camp. **As part of this effort, Cabo Verde's Tentative List**—an official inventory of sites the country intends to nominate for World Heritage status—**was formally registered with UNESCO in 2016**. It currently includes the following sites: the Historic Centre of Nova Sintra; Fogo Natural Park – Chã das Caldeiras; the Protected Areas Complex of the Island of Santa Luzia and the Islets of Branco and Raso; the Tarrafal Concentration Camp; the Historic Centre of Praia; the Historic Centre of São Filipe; Cova, Paúl and Ribeira da Torre Natural Park; and the Pedra de Lume Salt Pans.

Cabo Verdean Creole anchor's cultural identity yet lacks full political recognition

Cabo Verdean Creole is more than a means of communication—it **is a living expression of the country's intangible cultural heritage**, embodying centuries of collective memory, identity, and resilience.
Genetic and linguistic studies confirm that Cabo Verdean identity emerged from early and sustained admixture between Iberian settlers and West African populations, reinforcing its deeply rooted Creole heritage (Laurent *et al*., 2023). This foundational mixing—beginning in the late 15th century—shaped a culturally and biologically Creole society across the islands.

However, despite this common origin, **the institutional status of Cabo Verdean Creole (kriolu) remains limited**. Portuguese remains the sole official language, while kriolu—spoken by nearly all Cabo Verdeans—has yet to be formally integrated into administration, education, or constitutional frameworks. Although the *Alfabeto Unificado para a Escrita do Cabo-verdiano* (ALUPEC) was approved in 2009 to provide a unified phonetic writing system, its adoption has been uneven and frequently contested. Cabo Verdean Creole is referenced in three articles of the Constitution and in several key regulations (including the Lei de Bases do Sistema Educativo). However, **it has not yet been explicitly recognized as an official language**. A major challenge lies in the significant variation among regional dialects, with many speakers resisting what they perceive as an overrepresentation of the Santiago variety in standardization efforts (Alexandre and Swolkien, 2024).

This tension is further illustrated by the distinctive phonological and sociolinguistic traits found in variants such as that of Santo Antão, which have been shaped by historical migration patterns and geographic isolation. These features reflect broader dynamics in the evolution of Creole languages across the archipelago (Swolkien and Cobbinah, 2019) and underscore the importance of inclusive approaches to language planning.

In response to these challenges, grassroots initiatives have sought to promote accessibility and mutual recognition between variants. Tools such as the digital Kriolish platform (https://kriolish.com/) and bilingual dictionaries aim to bridge linguistic divides, empowering both local speakers and diaspora communities.

More broadly, kriolu has evolved beyond its role as a vernacular to become a central marker of cultural identity and postcolonial affirmation (Lopes, 2018). This shift has been increasingly recognized at the political level, with growing advocacy for the officialization of kriolu and its inclusion in the national education system. This recognition also resonates beyond Cabo Verde, as the Cabo Verdean diaspora is known for maintaining kriolu as a heritage language, often up to the third generation.

Anchored in scientific evidence of a shared Creole foundation, the promotion of kriolu represents a strategic opportunity to strengthen national identity and foster greater social cohesion. A balanced and pluralistic language policy—one that respects regional variation while affirming a unified cultural heritage—can

transform linguistic diversity from a point of tension into a powerful symbol of national unity.

Underwater cultural heritage remains undervalued and largely inaccessible

The **history of Cabo Verde has always been deeply intertwined with the evolution of Atlantic trade routes**, charted from the 15th century onwards not only by Portugal, but also by other European maritime powers such as Spain, France, England, and the Netherlands. Its privileged geostrategic position in the Atlantic quickly transformed the archipelago into a vital logistical base for navigators and ships during transoceanic crossings, embedding it early in the global dynamics of emerging modernity. This strategic position had direct consequences for the country's underwater cultural heritage (UCH): **Cabo Verde became one of the Atlantic's areas with the highest concentration of historical shipwrecks**, particularly off the coasts of Santiago, Boa vista, and Maio (Garcia *et al*, 2024).

These submerged sites represent a vast archaeological and heritage potential, serving as silent witnesses to the Atlantic circulation of people, goods, and cultures. Since the early 20th century, this potential has attracted not only scientific interest but also the **attention of treasure hunters**, drawn by the commercial value of the artefacts found on the seabed. In the 1990s, Cabo Verde issued its first licences for underwater archaeological research, notably to the South African company Afrimar (1993–1995), whose operations were purely commercial in nature. The absence of a solid legal framework and scientific

Shipwreck in Cabo Verde
Photo: Wlodzimierz Józef Szymaniak, 2023

oversight led to the looting of several archaeological sites, with valuable objects ending up in international auction houses. This episode had a devastating impact on the country's underwater heritage and prompted a long suspension of all authorisations for such activities, which lasted until **2017**. That year marked a **turning point**. Cabo Verde **began participating in and leading international projects that adopted an approach based on the protection, valorisation, and scientific study of its underwater heritage** (Garcia *et al*, 2024). Two major initiatives are particularly noteworthy: CONCHA and MARGULLAR.

CONCHA (The Construction of Early Modern Global Cities and Oceanic Networks in the Atlantic), coordinated by NOVA University Lisbon under the European H2020 programme (2018-2022), aimed to explore the development of Atlantic port cities from the late 15th to the end of the 18th century, deepening the understanding of relationships between coastal environments and global trade networks. As part of this project, three field campaigns were conducted between 2018 and 2019 on Santiago Island, focusing on: the **anchorage of Cidade Velha (Ribeira Grande)**, the 17th-century **São Francisco shipwreck** at Passa Pau, and the 1809 wreck of the **Portuguese frigate Urânia**, south of Ilhéu da Praia. Activities included diving, photographic and video recording, photogrammetric surveys, inventory of archaeological materials, and educational outreach. Recovered artefacts underwent desalination and mechanical cleaning for preservation and are now displayed at the Archaeology Museum in Praia. The CONCHA project enhanced the role of Cabo Verde's underwater heritage in understanding the first Atlantic globalisation, promoted local training and scientific dissemination (Bettencourt *et al*, 2020).

In parallel, **MARGULLAR** (2017–2020), an INTERREG MAC project involving the Macaronesian archipelagos (Cabo Verde, the Azores, Madeira, and the Canary Islands), focused on the shared valorisation of underwater cultural heritage through archaeological research, in situ conservation, and sustainable cultural tourism. This initiative entered a second phase—MARGULLAR 2—which began in 2022 and led to the development of an action plan for a shared underwater archaeological tourism product across the region. As part of this project, the exhibition—currently on display at the Sea Museum in Mindelo—was prepared.

Within the framework of these projects, Cabo Verde took significant steps to strengthen the institutional foundations for safeguarding its submerged heritage. The **National Commission for the Protection and Valorisation of Underwater Cultural Heritage was established in 2020**, bringing together all relevant national maritime institutions. A major milestone prior to this was **Cabo Verde's ratification of UNESCO's 2001 Convention on the Protection of Underwater Cultural Heritage in 2019**, through which the country committed to international standards for the preservation and responsible management of underwater cultural assets.

Parallel efforts have focused on **building national capacity and public awareness around** underwater cultural heritage (**UCH**). This has included the training of national specialists in underwater archaeology and the promotion of awareness campaigns aimed at coastal communities to highlight the value and vulnerability of submerged heritage. Authorities have also been working to recover and inventory historical records and documentation relating to known shipwrecks, while actively denouncing and combating the looting and illicit trade of underwater artefacts. In addition, a **Strategic Plan for the Underwater Heritage of Santiago Island** is currently under development. This plan encompasses key archaeological sites, including the Ilhéu de Santa Maria, the Calheta de São Martinho shipwreck, and the anchorage of Cidade Velha (Garcia *et al*, 2024).

UCH holds significant potential for Cabo Verde's sustainable development, particularly through education, scientific research, and responsible tourism. Looking ahead, the country envisions the creation of a Centre for Underwater Archaeology. Such a centre would foster technical training, promote interdisciplinary research, and facilitate the exchange of expertise across borders. Moreover, there is growing ambition to **incorporate underwater heritage into cultural tourism circuits**, enhancing public engagement with this hidden legacy. By doing so, Cabo Verde aims to balance preservation with economic opportunity, aligning its heritage policies with broader sustainable development goals.

CONCLUSION__

Limited national collaboration between institutions undermines heritage research efforts

Despite some formal agreements and occasional academic exchanges, **collaboration between Cabo Verde's Institute of Cultural Heritage (IPC) and national higher education institutions remains limited in scope and depth**. Research initiatives often rely heavily on international academic partnerships (especially with Portuguese HEIs) and externally funded projects, reflecting a broader structural dependency on foreign expertise and financing. This situation raises concerns about the sustainability of heritage research and capacity-building at the national level and highlights the need for stronger integration between cultural policy institutions and local academic actors.

Archaeological research and restoration projects in Cidade Velha have been carried out in partnership with NOVA University Lisbon (Portugal). The Misericórdia Complex is currently hosting the second archaeological campaign ahead of the redevelopment of the Cathedral–Misericórdia section, as part of the Resilient Tourism and Blue Economy Development Project. This phase continues excavations that began earlier this year, aiming to fully uncover the complex — a necessary step for future urban and environmental regeneration. The work is monitored by IPC technicians, though it does not involve participation from Cabo Verdean universities.

However, there is a **recent example of collaboration with a national higher education institution**. As part of the preparation of the nomination dossier for the former **Tarrafal Concentration Camp** to the UNESCO World Heritage List, **the IPC conducted a technical mission** to survey and assess the site's infrastructure. **This effort included architecture students from Jean Piaget University**, providing a hands-on educational experience in a heritage context. The mission was structured in phases, aiming to develop technical intervention proposals tailored to the site's various structures. The data collected will support the assessment of the site's condition and help define restoration strategies that respect international standards of authenticity, integrity, and sustainable safeguarding. Following the technical mission, IPC held a meeting with representatives from Civil Protection, the Tarrafal Municipal Sanitation Service, the National Police, and the Ministry of Environment. This marked the beginning of a site-specific risk management and preparedness plan, with

strategies outlined for operational simulations to identify vulnerabilities and establish mitigation measures that ensure the site's resilience and safety.

National collaboration was also evident in a recent initiative — the **exhibition "The Maize Cycle in Cabo Verde"**, launched during the Cabo Verde International Gastronomy Week in July 2025. Directed by the Museums Directorate and developed under the Operational Tourism Programme (POT 2022–2026), the exhibition was held as part of the event organised by the Ministry of Tourism and Transport, in partnership with the Cabo Verde School of Hospitality and Tourism (EHTCV) and the Association of Chefs of Cabo Verde. These **initiatives reflect a growing commitment to inclusive heritage management in Cabo Verde**, fostering synergies between national institutions, local communities, and international partners to ensure the sustainable preservation and promotion of the country's cultural assets. **However**, despite these promising steps, **the level of coordination and academic engagement remains insufficient** to fully meet the challenges of long-term heritage safeguarding and capacity building.

The **Periodic Reporting on the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, submitted to UNESCO in 2023, also reinforces the notion that**, despite some academic and institutional initiatives, **heritage research in Cabo Verde suffers from weak coordination**. The report notes that the only higher education course directly related to intangible cultural heritage — the Cultural Heritage Management degree at UniCV — currently has very few enrolled students, reflecting limited national engagement in the field. Research findings are seldom used to inform safeguarding policies, and collaboration between universities, the Institute of Cultural Heritage (IPC), and local communities remains fragmented. Although there are plans to launch a public digital platform enabling communities to access and contribute to the ICH inventory, this system is still under development and will require stronger institutional cooperation to be effective.

Finally, another important limitation should be noted. Efforts to promote cultural heritage in Cabo Verde have been undertaken with **minimal involvement from private actors**, as public–private partnerships remain virtually non-existent. A notable **exception** is the former **SUCLA fish-canning factory on the island of São Nicolau**, which was transformed into the **Fishing Museum** through a partnership between the private company, local

authorities, and cultural institutions — representing a rare example of public–private collaboration in the heritage sector.

The cultural ecosystem needs more investment to become more dynamic, resilient and attractive

Despite ongoing investments in infrastructure renewal and the development of new museological projects, **significant limitations persist within Cabo Verde's museum and cultural ecosystem**. Investment in museological infrastructures remains uneven. Many existing spaces still require substantial improvement to become more welcoming, up-to-date environments with engaging and inclusive narratives.

There is considerable **potential to enhance both onsite and online communication**, as well as **heritage interpretation**, offering an important opportunity to increase the visibility of Cabo Verde's rich cultural heritage and, ultimately, to **attract a broader and more diverse audience**. In this context, some progress is anticipated: in February 2023, a **UNESCO-funded project for the tourist signposting of Cidade Velha**, a World Heritage Site, was approved. Although implementation has not yet begun, t**he initiative is expected to significantly improve the visitor experience** through clearer and more informative signage across the site (UNESCO, 2023).

Cesária Évora Museum Centre, São Vicente Island, Cabo Verde
Photo: Cultivar Project, 2025

In addition to infrastructure challenges, **disparities in funding for cultural programming** also persist, often resulting in irregular, limited, or lower-quality offerings. This inconsistency weakens the overall impact of museums and

cultural institutions on society and undermines the long-term sustainability of the cultural sector. Beyond museums, Cabo Verde's cultural landscape includes a range of other dynamic institutions that could play a central role in revitalising and energising the sector. **Mindelo**, on the island of São Vicente, **hosts two of the country's most prominent cultural institutions—CNAD and CCM**—both of which enjoy special autonomous status and operate independently of the IPC. These institutions contribute significantly to artistic creation, community engagement, and cultural exchange; however, **like many others, they face funding constraints** that limit their full potential and highlight the broader need for more consistent investment across the cultural field.

The **National Centre for Art, Handicrafts and Design (CNAD)**, **inaugurated in 2022**, is a public institution under the direct supervision of the Ministry of Culture and Creative Industries. Dedicated to visual arts, traditional crafts, and

National Centre for Art, Handicrafts and Design (CNAD), in São Vicente Island
Photo: Cultivar Project, 2025

National Centre for Art, Handicrafts and Design (CNAD), in São Vicente Island
Photo: Cultivar Project, 2025

Mindelo Cultural Centre, in São Vicente Island, Cabo Verde
Photo: Cultivar Project, 2025

contemporary design, it is housed in a strikingly renovated building that includes exhibition galleries, training spaces, artistic residencies, a library, and a shop. CNAD serves as a **creative hub fostering dialogue between heritage and innovation**.

Nearby, the **Centro Cultural do Mindelo (CCM)**, **created in 1997**, occupies a beautifully restored 19th-century customs house in the heart of the city. Managed by the Ministry of Culture and Creative Industries, the CCM is a key cultural venue focused primarily on the performing arts, including music, theatre, and dance. It hosts a variety of events, from concerts and theatre performances to film screenings and dance festivals, contributing significantly to the city's vibrant cultural scene. In addition to performances, the CCM offers community-based programming, such as workshops, exhibitions, and educational activities, providing a platform for both local and international artists. With its 226-seat auditorium and flexible spaces, it plays a vital role in fostering artistic exchange and cultural development in Mindelo. The CCM has become a cultural landmark, reinforcing Mindelo's identity as a hub for artistic creation and cultural exchange in Cabo Verde. Through its diverse programming, it continues to inspire and engage local communities and visitors alike, making a significant impact on the cultural landscape of the city.

Strengthening higher education in the fields of heritage and tourism is essential to ensure the long-term sustainability of the sector. Although academic programmes in these areas do exist in Cabo Verde, they are increasingly affected by student migration to Europe, which weakens national capacity for effective planning and implementation in cultural and tourism

policy. It is therefore crucial to improve the quality and interdisciplinarity of these programmes to make them more attractive and better aligned with current professional demands.

3.4. Natural Heritage

Cabo Verde's biological wealth demands a commitment to conservation

__DESCRIPTION

Cabo Verde represents **one of the most biologically and geologically distinctive territories in the Macaronesian biogeographical region**. Its geographic isolation, combined with volcanic origin and climatic variability, has given rise to a remarkably rich and fragile natural heritage. Biodiversity is characterised by **high levels of endemism**—particularly among **plants**, **reptiles**, and **birds**—many of which are confined to specific islands or microhabitats, especially in mountainous zones such as Fogo, Santiago, and Santo Antão.

A recent survey identified 518 useful **plant species**, including 38 endemic and 44 endangered taxa, with native flora playing critical roles in local livelihoods, particularly as sources of forage, firewood, and traditional medicines (Duarte *et al*., 2022). Iconic endemic species such as *Euphorbia tuckeyana*, *Echium vulcanorum*, and *Artemisia gorgonum* are more than botanical symbols: they function as ecological indicators of habitat integrity and climate sensitivity. These plants are typically confined to high-altitude volcanic slopes, ancient lava flows, or rocky outcrops, where they have evolved specialised adaptations such as drought resistance and deep root systems. For instance,

Osga-gigante (*Tarentola gigas ssp. brancoensis*). Photo: Auréles Miralien, 2017
Available in biodiversity4all.org, CC-BY-SA 4.0

Pardal-de-cabo-verde (*Passer iagoensis*), male. Photo: Ivo Antušek, 2007
Available in Wikimedia Commons, Public domain

Loggerhead sea turtle (*Caretta caretta*). Photo: Roberto Pillon, 2016.
Available in biodiversity4all.org, CC BY-NC 4.0

Echium vulcanorum is found exclusively on the upper slopes of Fogo Volcano, contributing to pollination networks and soil stabilisation (Duarte *et al.*, 2022).

Cabo Verde's **terrestrial fauna** also reveals patterns of insular endemism, shaped by long-term geographic isolation and limited gene flow. Notably, *Chilades evorae*, the archipelago's only known **endemic butterfly**, has a fragmented distribution limited to islands such as Santo Antão and Santa Luzia, where it is dependent on specific host plants and highly sensitive to habitat disturbance (Russell and Tennent, 2018). **Reptilian** endemism is also significant, with several species of geckos (*Tarentola*) and skinks (*Chioninia*) found only on individual islands, many threatened by invasive species and habitat loss.

Coastal and marine ecosystems are another vital pillar of Cabo Verde's natural capital. The surrounding waters serve as migratory corridors and breeding grounds for cetaceans, including humpback whales

CULTIVAR Project n. 101179293
Co-funded by the European Union

(*Megaptera novaeangliae*) and several dolphin species. Beaches on islands such as Boa Vista, Maio, and Sal are internationally significant nesting sites for the loggerhead **sea turtle** (*Caretta caretta*), making **Cabo Verde the third most important rookery for this species globally**. **Coral-rich marine habitats** and coastal zones also support a wide range of fish species critical to artisanal fisheries and food security.

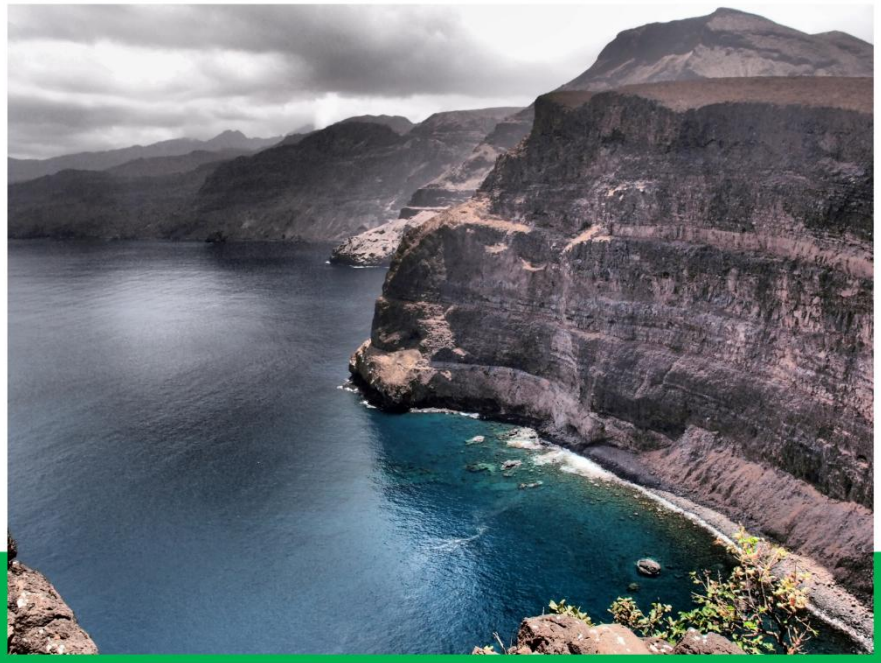
Biosphere Reserve in Fogo Island, Cabo Verde. Available in reservadabiosfera.pt
Photo: Cultivar Project, 2025

These ecosystems, while crucial for biodiversity and local economies through ecotourism, are increasingly threatened by unregulated development and habitat degradation (Sena *et al.*, 2023).

Topography and climatic gradients reinforce Cabo Verde's ecological diversity. Elevation differences—from sea level to over 2,800 metres—generate **distinct microclimates and vegetation zones**. Plant communities vary significantly with altitude and exposure, particularly on mountainous islands such as Santo Antão and Fogo (Neto *et al.*, 2020).

Volcanic activity has also created unique geological landmarks. Fogo Volcano, still active, dominates its island and serves as a hub for geological and ecological research. Other prominent landscapes include the **Deserto** de Viana in Boa Vista and the Ribeira da Torre gorge in Santo Antão. **Coastal salterns** in Sal, Maio, and Boa Vista host highly specialised microbial and salt-tolerant species, though many of these ecosystems are under threat from abandonment and urban encroachment (McCulloch *et al.*, 2019).

In recent decades, **increasing investment in environmental research and conservation** has supported efforts to safeguard this natural heritage.



Baía do Inferno e do Monte Angra National Park, in Santiago Island
Photo: Wlodzimierz Józef Szymaniak, 2012

To preserve these ecosystems, Cabo Verde has designated 47 **protected areas**, 26 of which are operational. These include the **Parque Natural do Fogo**, which protects volcanic and alpine ecosystems; the **Reserva da Biosfera da Boa Vista**, a UNESCO-recognised reserve; and the **Parque Natural de Monte Gordo** on São Nicolau, known for dense endemic forest. A notable recent example is the **Parque Natural da Baía do Inferno** e **Monte Angra** on Santiago, the first protected area created through a community-led initiative. Studies show that local engagement in management planning greatly increases conservation support (Sena *et al.*, 2023).

These protected areas are founded upon the Environmental Framework Law (Lei n.º 86/IV/93) **and the Protected Areas Law** (Decree-Law No. 3/2003), which together establish the legal basis for biodiversity conservation and management of protected zones in Cabo Verde. **This framework has recently been strengthened through updated legislation**. **Decree-Law No. 23/2023** introduces a regime for **Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA) of plans and programmes**, embedding sustainability and social well-being as core principles at early stages of planning. Following this, **Decree-Law No. 10/2025** establishes the legal framework for a **National Strategic Forestry Plan**, its corresponding Forestry Action Plan, and detailed forestry management instruments, reinforcing long-term commitments to sustainable land and forest governance.

Complementing the terrestrial and forestry legislation, **Resolution No. 36/2024** endorses the **National Strategy for the Sea 2023–2033 and its Action Plan**, setting out the government's strategic vision for marine governance,

biodiversity protection, and the sustainable use of ocean resources. National policy frameworks such as the **National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP)**, the **National Spatial Planning Policy**, and marine and forest strategies are also highlighted in recent environmental assessments as critical tools for advancing sustainable development, despite persistent implementation gaps (MAHOT, 2023).

Serra Malagueta National Park, in Santiago Island, Cabo Verde
Photo: Cultivar Project, 2025

Internationally, **Cabo Verde has ratified several major environmental conventions that reinforce its national strategies**. The country ratified the **Convention on Biological Diversity** (CBD) on 29 March 1995, committing to conservation, sustainable use, and equitable benefit-sharing. Since then, it has submitted regular national biodiversity reports and developed a comprehensive **National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) for 2014–2030**. This plan, shaped through multi-stakeholder consultation, outlines seven strategic priorities and 15 national targets aligned with the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, including the goal of protecting 20% of terrestrial and 5% of marine areas by 2025. As of 2014, 26 protected areas were operational, covering over 10% of national territory (CBD, 2023). However, challenges persist, including limited biodiversity integration into land-use planning, unstable funding, and weak monitoring systems. The NBSAP is reviewed every three years, with an update expected after COP-16 to align with the Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

Under the **UN Convention to Combat Desertification** (UNCCD), Cabo Verde became the first African country—and second globally—to ratify the agreement in March 1995. The convention supports national strategies to

combat drought, soil erosion, and land degradation, critical in this semi-arid context.

The country also joined the **Ramsar Convention** on Wetlands in July 2005 and has since designated four wetlands of international importance: Lagoa de Pedra Badejo (Santiago), Lagoa do Rabil and Ilhéu de Curral Velho (Boa Vista), and Salinas do Porto Inglês (Maio), totalling approximately 2,300 hectares (Ramsar, 2025).

More recently, Cabo Verde has actively engaged with emerging frameworks for global biodiversity governance. In May **2025**, it hosted a regional summit endorsing the **BBNJ Agreement (Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction)**, committing to the conservation of marine biodiversity in areas beyond national waters. Cabo Verde signed the agreement on its opening day and reaffirmed its ambition to protect 30% of its marine territory by 2030, aligning with its national blue economy vision and international conservation goals.

Some parks and nature reserves in Cabo Verde that are more accessible and frequented by visitors	Island
Parque Natural da Serra da Malagueta (Assomada)	Santa Catarina Island
Monte Pico de Antónia (S. Lourenço dos Órgãos)	Santiago Island
Parque Natural de Rui Vaz e Pico de Antónia (Rui Vaz)	Santiago Island
Serra da Malagueta (Tarrafal)	Santiago Island
Serra do Monte João Teves (S. Lourenço dos Orgãos)	Santiago Island
Parque Natural de Monte Verde	São Vicente Island
Parque Natural Monte Gordo	São Nicolau Island
Parque Natural da Cova, (Paul), Ribeira da Torre (Ribeira Grande)	Santo Antão Island
Parque Natural de Moroços (Ribeira Grande)	Santo Antão Island
Parque Natural de Topo de Coroa	Santo Antão Island
Parque Natural de Barreiro e Figueira (Barreiro)	Maio Island
Parque Natural da Ilha do Fogo	Fogo Island
Parque Natural Norte	Boa Vista Island

Endemic Species from Cabo Verde
Pardal-de-cabo-verde (*Passer iagoensis*) Freira-do-bugio (*Pterodroma feae)* Cagarra-de-cabo-verde *(Pterodroma feae)* Rabo-de-junco (*Phaethon aethereus*) Fragata (Fregata magnificens) Laverca-do-raso (*Alauda razae*) Osga-Gigante-de-cabo-verde (*Tarentola gigas*) Osga-de-Bouvier (*Hemidactylus bouvieri)* Lagarto-de-Vaillant (*Chioninia vaillantii*) Lagartixas (*Chioninia fogoensis / Chioninia nicolauensis*) Burrinho (*Chromis lubbocki*) Sargo-preto-de-Cabo-Verde (*Diplodus fasciatus*) Morro (*Girella zonata*) Góbio-de-Cabo-Verde (*Gobius tetrophthalmus*) Mané-cabeça-de-Cabo-Verde (*Microlipophrys Caboverdensis*) Lagosta-rosa (*Palinurus charlestoni*) Percebes (*Pollicipes caboverdensis*)

__ANALYSIS

Cabo Verde is home to a valuable but vulnerable natural heritage

Cabo Verde's ecosystems face **multiple pressures that threaten both terrestrial and marine biodiversity**. **Urban expansion**, **tourism infrastructure**, **overfishing**, **invasive species**, and **climate change**—particularly water scarcity and desertification—are degrading natural habitats and intensifying land and water resource conflicts, especially on the islands of Sal and Boa Vista. These dynamics are further corroborated by national environmental diagnostics, which identify **uncontrolled coastal development and habitat fragmentation** as key pressures on fragile ecosystems (MAHOT, 2023).

Although several protected areas have been established, **environmental management remains under-resourced**, with weak enforcement and a lack of integrated governance plans, highlighting the urgent need for sustainable planning.

Euphorbia tuckeyana in Chã das Caldeiras. Photo Ji-Elle, 2012
Available in Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 3.0

To address these challenges, and as previously mentioned, Cabo Verde has formally established multiple protected areas, including marine zones such as the **Santa Luzia Reserve**. Yet the effectiveness of these areas remains limited due to weak enforcement, lack of financial and human resources, and the absence of integrated management plans. National environmental assessments also highlight that many protected areas still lack operational management plans, suffer from insufficient surveillance, and remain vulnerable to overlapping land-use pressures (MAHOT, 2023). The recent proposal to reclassify and redefine the boundaries of the **Santa Luzia Marine Protected Area** illustrates growing awareness of the need to strengthen legal and operational frameworks for conservation. This awareness is particularly crucial given the exceptional ecological value of the region.

Recent studies reveal that **Cabo Verde hosts a remarkably rich and distinctive flora**, characterised by high levels of endemism and ecological value. Several endemic species, such as *Echium vulcanorum* and *Euphorbia tuckeyana*, are found exclusively in specific islands or habitats and are considered key indicators of ecological integrity. The uninhabited island of Santa Luzia, for example, preserves one of the most original natural landscapes of the archipelago and showcases intact plant communities that reflect minimal anthropogenic disturbance (Romeiras *et al.*, 2023).

The native flora of Cabo Verde is not only ecologically valuable but also socioeconomically important. Studies highlight the significant pharmacological potential of native medicinal plants, particularly on Santiago Island, where certain species show promising antimalarial and cytotoxic properties.

Moreover, traditional agricultural practices rely heavily on native and introduced plant varieties that are well-adapted to the archipelago's arid conditions. National diagnostics confirm that local communities, especially in rural areas, remain highly dependent on ecosystem services for food, fuel, water regulation, and income, underlining the need to integrate biodiversity conservation with livelihoods (MAHOT, 2023).

The **sustainable use and conservation of this plant diversity** have become **central themes in current scientific cooperation** between Cabo Verdean and international institutions. Initiatives such as the **CVAgrobiodiversity project** have promoted applied research and capacity building, resulting in scientific publications, field guides, and postgraduate training. These efforts aim to reduce the vulnerability of native species and agroecosystems to climate change.

However, despite these positive developments, **serious challenges persist**. Many endemic species are now listed as threatened on the IUCN Red List due to habitat degradation, overharvesting, and narrow distribution ranges. The excessive exploitation of native plants for food, medicine, or firewood is of growing concern, particularly as rural communities remain highly dependent on natural resources. Furthermore, the effects of climate change—such as reduced rainfall and rising temperatures—pose additional stress on plant populations and natural habitats. Species distribution modelling shows that iconic endemic trees like *Dracaena draco subsp*. caboverdeana may lose suitable habitat in the coming decades.

Additionally, a **lack of comprehensive ecological and phenological data**—particularly on plant-pollinator

Echium vulcanorum in Chã das Caldeiras. Photo Ji-Elle, 2012
Available in Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 3.0

interactions—**limits the effectiveness of conservation strategies**. Studies of native insect pollinators, such as endemic *Amegilla* bees, underline the importance of preserving specific habitats to maintain biodiversity and ecosystem resilience. This is consistent with national environmental assessments, which emphasise the need for improved biodiversity monitoring systems and the systematic collection of disaggregated data to guide policy and conservation planning (MAHOT, 2023).

Protecting Cabo Verde's flora is both an environmental necessity and a foundation for sustainable development. **Conservation strategies must be reinforced by continued research, traditional knowledge preservation, and integrated land-use planning to safeguard this invaluable natural heritage.** Institutional cooperation and integrated governance are increasingly viewed as essential. Several initiatives promote co-management models involving local communities, NGOs, and state institutions. Still, structural constraints and limited capacity continue to hinder coordinated conservation efforts at the national level.

Cabo Verde's natural heritage and biodiversity hold significant potential as drivers of sustainable development

Protected landscapes, ecological trails, and marine ecosystems can be strategically leveraged to support eco-tourism, scientific research, and environmental education. If effectively managed, this heritage can become a foundation for inclusive economic growth, national identity, and long-term ecological resilience.

Cabo Verde has actively sought to **strengthen the connection between biodiversity conservation and tourism development**. One key initiative was the **BIO-TUR Project** (2017–2022), implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture and Environment with support from the Global Environment Facility (GEF), UNDP, and the national government. The project aimed to integrate biodiversity into tourism planning and practices across four priority islands—Santiago, Sal, Boa Vista, and Maio—where biodiversity faces growing pressure from tourism and coastal development. BIO-TUR focused on improving the management of eight protected areas, promoting nature-based tourism, and supporting community-based livelihoods such as agroecology, artisanal production, and homestays. It also piloted biodiversity offset mechanisms and

encouraged participatory co-management models involving local fishers, NGOs, and tourism operators. By the end of the project, biodiversity was more effectively incorporated into territorial planning, and new opportunities for conservation-linked income generation had emerged. In 2023, the government signalled its intention to expand this model to other islands.

Sargo-preto-de-cabo-verde (*Diplodus fasciatus*). Photo: Thomas Menut, 2012
Available in biodiversity4all.org, CC BY-NC 4.0

The approval of **Decree-Law No. 28/2023**, which **establishes the legal regime for the protection and classification of touristic walking routes in Cabo Verde**, represents a pivotal step toward integrating biodiversity conservation into national tourism policy. It provides a formal framework to safeguard ecologically sensitive areas, promote sustainable tourism, and strengthen the participation of local communities, NGOs, and tourism operators in territorial planning and conservation efforts.

Marine and coastal areas represent some of the most remarkable elements of Cabo Verde's natural heritage. Notable examples include the island of Santa Luzia and the uninhabited islets of Rombo and Raso, as well as Baía de Inferno and the Monte Angra Natural Park—the latter being the most recently designated protected area in the archipelago. Jean Piaget University contributed to the preparation of the application for its creation, promoting the site as a living laboratory for ocean literacy. The park's significance lies in its diverse terrestrial and underwater landscapes, combined with rich biodiversity, which is largely preserved thanks to its remoteness from inhabited areas.

Other noteworthy sites include the João Valente Bank and Cape Mangrade, which also form part of the archipelago's valuable natural heritage. Among the most striking components of Cabo Verde's biodiversity are various coral

species, some of which are endemic. These corals enhance the vibrancy of the underwater landscape and serve as natural indicators of pollution. In several areas, coral bleaching—often a precursor to coral death—has been observed. Considering this, the expansion of marine protected areas is strongly recommended as a means of promoting the sustainable use of marine resources, particularly in alignment with blue tourism initiatives.

CONCLUSION__

A well-designed environmental policy is vital to ensuring the long-term sustainability of agriculture and tourism

Cabo Verde, as a Small Island Developing State (SIDS), suffers from heightened **environmental vulnerabilities**, particularly in sectors reliant on natural resources such as agriculture and tourism, which are increasingly affected by **climate change**. The archipelago continues to experience persistent **environmental challenges**, including **ecosystem degradation**, **water insecurity**, **biodiversity loss**, and **declining environmental quality**, largely due to **inadequate natural resource management**. Some authors argue that **Nature-Based Solutions (NbS) are essential for overcoming these obstacles and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**. The recommended strategies encompass: Forest Landscape Restoration (FLR), Ecosystem-Based Adaptation (EbA), Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), ecological forest engineering, and the protection of wild genetic resources. NbS are presented as a means of fostering an integrated and participatory approach that delivers co-benefits for both the natural environment and human well-being, with particular emphasis on environmental education, applied science, and ecological monitoring. The proposal extends beyond mere **conservation,** focusing instead on concrete actions such as **reforestation, assisted natural regeneration, and the protection of critical watershed**s, among other adaptation and mitigation measures (Neves *et al.* 2022). In conclusion, **NbS should become a central pillar of Cabo Verde's environmental policy**, promoting climate resilience, ecological sustainability, and socio-economic well-being in a cohesive and integrated manner.

CULTIVAR Project n. 101179293
Co-funded by the European Union

Cabo Verde has yet to fully realise its sustainable ocean economy potential

Cabo Verde holds considerable **potential to develop a sustainable ocean economy** that supports inclusive and resilient growth. The ocean economy—particularly coastal and marine tourism—has been identified as a strategic pathway for development. However, the country's current dependence on a relatively narrow set of tourism services increases its exposure to external shocks and limits long-term diversification (OECD, 2023).

At the same time, increasing **pressure on marine ecosystems—driven by tourism, fishing, and coastal development—poses serious risks to environmental sustainability**. These pressures are compounded by socioeconomic disparities, especially in coastal communities, where targeted interventions are required to ensure that the benefits of growth are shared more equitably.

Although Cabo Verde has made progress in establishing governance frameworks to support the blue economy, there remain significant **gaps in cross-sectoral coordination, enforcement capacity, and the implementation of integrated marine spatial planning**. Strengthening governance will be essential for unlocking the full potential of ocean-based sectors.

Access to blue finance is still limited. There is considerable opportunity to leverage international support, including official development assistance, climate finance, and innovative financial instruments such as blue bonds and blended finance models. Public–private partnerships can also play an important role in mobilising resources for sustainable ocean initiatives.

Mosquito Port, in Santiago Island, Cabo Verde
Photo: Cultivar Project, 2025

CULTIVAR Project n. 101179293
Co-funded by the European Union

In terms of policy tools and knowledge systems, decision-making is often hindered by a lack of disaggregated and sector-specific data. Expanding data collection and adopting integrated tools for coastal and marine management will be critical steps toward evidence-based planning.

Finally, **investment in ocean-related education** and capacity building is a foundational requirement. Promoting ocean literacy, vocational training, and higher education in areas such as marine science, sustainable tourism, and resource management will equip Cabo Verde with the human capital needed to support innovation and long-term sustainability in the ocean economy.

International Conventions Signed by Cabo Verde on Nature Conservation	
Year of Ratification	**Convention/Protocol**
In progress	Minamata Convention on Mercury (2013)
2017	Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) (2015)
2006	Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) (2005)
2006	Rotterdam Convention on the regulation of international trade in dangerous chemicals (1998)
2006	Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) (1979)
2005	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) (1975)
2005	Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, especially as Waterfowl Habitat (1975)
2001	Vienna Convention on the Protection of the Ozone Layer (1988)
1999	Basileia Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal (1992)
1995	Convention to Combat Desertification (1994 - signed, 1996 in effect)
1995	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) (1992)
1995	Convention on Biological Diversity (1992)

3.5. Tourism

Tourism is one of Cabo Verde's most dynamic and vital economic sectors

__DESCRIPTION

According to the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC, 2024), the industry represented **35.1% of the national GDP in 2023** and is forecasted to expand to 42.6% by 2034, underlining its critical role in driving economic growth and resilience. **The sector has evolved from a modest presence in the early 1990s to becoming one of the main drivers of the national economy**, stimulating nearly all other sectors around it. Statistical data from the National Institute of Statistics (INE) indicate a **steady and record-breaking increase in tourist arrivals each year**, which presents several challenges both for the sector itself and for the broader national economy. As a result, political and economic actors will need to continue seeking ways to diversify the economy and reduce its dependence on tourism, given the sector's high vulnerability to external shocks.

Employment generated by the sector is equally substantial. In 2024, the **travel and tourism sector in Cabo Verde** supported approximately 105,100 jobs, **representing 42.0% of total national employment**. This includes both direct jobs (such as those in hotels, airlines, and tour operators) and indirect or induced employment across the broader economy. This figure confirms that **tourism is the largest employer in the country**, highlighting its strategic role not only in economic output but also in **labour market stability and social inclusion**.

Tourism is also a cornerstone of Cabo Verde's export economy. In **2023**, international visitor spending (referred to as "visitor exports") totaled **CVE 59.5 billion**, equivalent to **56.4% of all national exports**.

Growth prospects for the sector remain robust, with a projected **compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 7.5% between 2024 and 2034**, well above the general economy's expected CAGR of just 2.2% (WTTC, 2024).

This means that tourism is not only a key driver of post-COVID-19 recovery, but also a strategic lever for long-term development. Indeed, due to its direct, indirect, and induced effects—both within and across sectors—**tourism is regarded as the engine of the national economy** (Monteiro, 2023).

Tourism Office, Cidade Velha, in Santiago Island, Cabo Verde
Photo: Cultivar Project, 2025

Tourism governance in Cabo Verde is structured to provide strategic direction while ensuring practical delivery on the ground. The responsibilities for policy design, implementation, destination marketing, and quality assurance are shared between the **Tourism Development Office**, which focuses on policy coordination, and the **Instituto do Turismo de Cabo Verde (ITCV)**, which serves as the operational agency. Both institutions operate **under the umbrella of the Ministry of Tourism and Transport**, as established by Decree-Law No. 67/2021.

Tourism statistics show a predominance of sun-and-beach tourism

Tourism in Cabo Verde remains **highly concentrated in the islands of Sal and Boa Vista**, which together received 76.7% of all international visitors. These islands are characterised by mid-to high-end hotels operating mostly under an all-inclusive model, **primarily geared towards sun-and-beach tourism** (Sarmento *et al.*, 2023).

The **National Institute of Statistics** (INE) **publishes annual tourism statistics**, which allow for a clear and detailed understanding of the sector.

In **2024**, the tourism sector demonstrated strong recovery, recording 1,028,691 guest arrivals—a 17.2% increase from 2023—and 6,186,049 overnight stays, up 15.9%. The average stay was six nights, slightly above the African average. **Foreign visitors accounted for 93.8% of arrivals**, with Portugal (22.2%), the UK (18.2%), Germany, the Netherlands, France, and the USA as key source markets (INE, 2025a).

CULTIVAR Project n. 101179293
Co-funded by the European Union

Sal Island, Cabo Verde
Photo: Cultivar Project, 2025

Island preferences varied: Portuguese tourists mostly visited Santiago and São Vicente; British tourists overwhelmingly chose Boa Vista (97.4%); Germans split between Sal and Boa Vista; Dutch tourists favoured Sal, while Americans leaned toward Santiago and São Vicente. Boa Vista led in both arrivals (34.2%) and overnight stays (46.0%), followed by Sal (42.1%) (INE, 2025a).

Hotels remained the dominant accommodation type, accounting for 87.6% of all arrivals and 91.0% of overnight stays. By the end of 2024, 360 establishments were operational. Santo Antão had the highest number of accommodation units (79), followed by Santiago (69), São Vicente (53), and Sal (50). Sal and Boa Vista combined offered 76% of all rooms and beds, reinforcing their status as the main tourism hubs (INE, 2025b).

The tourism workforce was concentrated in Sal (57.7%), Boa Vista (21.7%), and Santiago (8.4%), with hotels employing 82.9% of all tourism workers. Women represented 57.3% of the workforce, and 93% of workers were Cabo Verdean nationals, underlining the sector's role in local employment and gender inclusion. However, temporary contracts dominated, with 65.5% of workers on fixed-term contracts—mostly for three months (INE, 2025b).

In the **first quarter of 2025**, the tourism sector continued to expand with 257,436 arrivals (+15% YoY) and 1,392,701 overnight stays (+10.8%). **Portugal remained the top source market** (23.2%), and **Boa Vista and Sal retained their lead**. However, **São Vicente** (+25.1%), **Santiago** (+21.6%), **and Santo Antão** (+14.2%) showed strong growth, supporting the trend towards **tourism diversification** (INE, 2025c).

One of **Cabo Verde's main challenges**, due to its insular geography, **is inter-island connectivity**. The country has seven airports, including four international ones located in Santiago, Boa Vista, Sal, and São Vicente. Nine airlines, including the national carrier TACV (Transportes Aéreos de Cabo Verde), operate flights to Cabo Verde. Inter-island connections are made by air or sea, with Santiago serving as the central hub. Ferry services also operate between São Vicente, São Nicolau, Sal, Boa Vista, Fogo, Maio, and Santiago (Sarmento *et al*., 2023).
In recent years, the launch of **new routes by low-cost airlines** has significantly increased the flow of tourists, particularly for sun-and-beach tourism.
However, **persistent instability in air and maritime transport between the islands**—especially frequent delays and cancellations—**creates serious constraints** for the tourism sector and has a particularly negative impact on cultural tourism.

ANALYSIS__

Cabo Verde is pursuing a strategy of tourism diversification

In recent years, Cabo Verde has **sought to transform its tourism sector through a more sustainable, diversified, and territorially inclusive approach**. Traditionally reliant on the sun-and-beach model, heavily concentrated on the islands of Sal and Boa Vista, the country has recognised the need to extend the benefits of tourism to all the islands by promoting models that value cultural identity, natural resources, the blue economy, and community participation (Canalejo and Sánchez-Cañizares, 2017; Morales and Quintana, 2019).
This transformation process gained momentum with the approval, in 2019, of the ***Grand Strategic Plan Options for Sustainable Tourism Development 2018–2030*** (GOPEDS-Tourism). This strategic plan, designed as **a complement to the Strategic Plan for Sustainable Development (PEDS)**, sets out the main guidelines for national tourism policy until 2030. GOPEDS establishes four fundamental pillars: environmental sustainability, social inclusion, geographic diversification, and intersectoral integration. In addition, it identifies seven priority segments for tourism development: sun-and-beach tourism, nature and rural tourism, urban and cultural tourism, cruise tourism, inter-island circuits, nautical and sports tourism, and emerging niches such as scientific, wellness, and religious tourism (Rosário, 2017; World Bank, 2019; OECD, 2022).

As the operational basis for this strategic plan, the government launched the **Operational Tourism Programme (POT 2022–2026)**, an instrument aimed at translating GOPEDS directives into concrete actions. POT guides investments in infrastructure, institutional and business capacity-building, international promotion, and the development of regional tourism products. It includes flagship interventions such as the urban regeneration of Cidade Velha and the promotion of mountain tourism in Santo Antão and Fogo. The programme also adopts a cluster-based logic, aiming to strengthen local value chains with special attention to Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and youth and female entrepreneurship.

The ambition for diversification also materialised in the **development of island-specific tourism masterplans**, supported by the World Bank between 2018 and 2019. These plans were designed to create strategies tailored to the unique characteristics of each territory, guiding spatial planning, investment, and regional tourism promotion. For instance, the masterplan for **Santiago Island** focuses on **cultural tourism**, the valorisation of historical heritage, and connections between urban, rural, and coastal areas (Sarmento *et al.* 2023). In **Santo Antão**, the plan **prioritises nature tourism and hiking**, including proposals for the rehabilitation and signage of trails, the integration of rural communities, and the adoption of sustainable practices. On the islands of **Sal and São Vicente**, the plans highlight **coastal, nautical, creative, and event-based tourism**, with an emphasis on innovation and connectivity.

This strategic effort was further reinforced by the implementation of the **Resilient Tourism and Blue Economy Development in Cabo Verde project**, funded by the World Bank since 2023. With a budget exceeding 40 million USD (grants and credit), the project aims to consolidate the transition to a form of tourism that is more resilient to climate change, more territorially and thematically diversified, and deeply rooted in the principles of the blue economy. The project supports initiatives in sustainable coastal infrastructure, institutional capacity-building, promotion of green business models, and social inclusion—particularly of women and youth in coastal communities.

Although **women make up a significant share of the tourism workforce in Cabo Verde**, particularly in hospitality and services, **they remain under-represented in leadership roles and higher-paying positions**. Barriers such as limited training, restricted access to finance, and domestic and family care

responsibilities continue to hinder their career progression. However, the growth of blue tourism presents meaningful opportunities for women's economic inclusion, especially in areas like ecotourism, artisanal fishing, and community-based coastal tourism. **Targeted gender-sensitive policies, training programmes, improved access to credit, and support services are essential to unlock this potential** (World Bank, 2023).

Cabo Verde is thus positioning itself as an Atlantic laboratory for tourism innovation, where economic growth is aligned with environmental conservation, the valorisation of local cultures, and a commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals. The trajectory set in motion by GOPEDS-Tourism, operationalised through POT, the masterplans, and the resilient tourism project, represents a paradigm shift aimed at transforming the archipelago into a sustainable, competitive, and equitable tourism destination.

Ecotourism and event-based tourism are emerging as valuable segments of tourism

Ecotourism offers Cabo Verde a valuable opportunity to align environmental conservation with inclusive economic development. With its dramatic volcanic landscapes, rich biodiversity, and **extensive network of hiking trails—particularly on the island of Santo Antão**—the country is well placed to become a world-class destination for nature-based tourism. A 2023 study by the World Bank and the Adventure Travel Trade Association found that over **90% of international tour operators rated Cabo Verde's hiking potential as 'high' or 'very high'**, underscoring growing international interest.

Adventure tourists increasingly seek authentic, sustainable experiences and are willing to pay for well-structured, community-led services. This trend creates an opportunity to involve local communities directly in tourism delivery, supporting livelihoods while promoting conservation.

Based on a 2019 **survey** of 523 **international tourists visiting Santo Antão, hiking emerged as one of the island's primary draws**, with 83% of respondents identifying it as a key motivation for their trip. This finding reinforces the island's positioning as a premier destination for nature-based tourism, especially among **European travellers**, who make up the bulk of visitors—**predominantly from France, Germany, and the Netherlands.**

Santo Antão Island. Photo: Pitt Reitmaier, 2005
Avaliable Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 3.0

The data also show that tourists perceive the safety of hiking trails very positively, with a satisfaction rating of 4.22 out of 5, and they rated the island's natural beauty even higher, at 4.74 out of 5. Despite this, the study highlights gaps in trail infrastructure: visitors rated trail diversity and conservation comparatively lower (3.89 out of 5), and tourist signage and information services received some of the lowest ratings across all attributes, suggesting room for targeted improvements (Lopes and Delgado, 2019). These insights underscore the importance of pairing investments in trail rehabilitation with visitor services and interpretation infrastructure, to enhance both experience quality and environmental stewardship.

As has already been noted, **several barriers remain to be addressed.** These include inadequate trail signage, limited infrastructure, lack of visitor centres, insufficient guide training, and the absence of integrated sustainability standards. Cabo Verde also suffers from low visibility in the global adventure travel market, which hinders its full inclusion in international circuits. Unlocking this potential requires strategic investment in trail infrastructure, guide certification, and environmentally responsible accommodation. Strengthening destination marketing and fostering community engagement will also be key to positioning Santo Antão—and Cabo Verde more broadly—as a leading ecotourism and hiking destination grounded in sustainability and local benefit (World Bank and ATTA, 2023).

In **2023**, the Government of Cabo Verde's Special Projects Management Unit launched the **Biodiversity Management Plan for the trail rehabilitation**

subproject on Santo Antão. The initiative aims to strengthen nature-based tourism by improving trekking infrastructure, covering over 300 km across 40 trails that span the island's three municipalities. A sustainable management model will accompany the intervention to help preserve local ecosystems.
Many of these trails cross protected areas legally recognised for their high biodiversity value. As such, the plan was developed in line with the World Bank's Environmental and Social Standard 6 (ESS6), which mandates strict measures to prevent, mitigate, and offset environmental impacts—particularly in critical natural habitats. Key protected areas include the Moroços, Cova-Paul-Ribeira da Torre, and Tope de Coroa natural parks, the Cruzinha marine park, and the Pombas Protected Landscape. These areas host numerous endemic and threatened species, including plants, reptiles, birds, and marine turtles.
During implementation, potential risks were identified, such as accidental damage to native flora and fauna, noise-related disturbance to birdlife, and improper waste disposal. To mitigate these risks, the plan includes awareness campaigns for workers and communities, environmental monitoring, guide training, visitor conduct guidelines, and the installation of waste collection points. Measures are structured in phases—during construction, in the first tourism season post-completion, and over the long term—with a focus on involving local communities and institutions in biodiversity conservation (Centeio, 2023).

Event-based tourism is a growing branch of the sector in Cabo Verde, with the country increasingly positioning itself as a vibrant destination by drawing on its rich cultural heritage, musical traditions, and community-led festivities. Across several islands, t**he country hosts a diverse calendar of festivals and cultural celebrations** that not only **attract domestic and international visitors** but also reinforce local identity and drive inclusive economic growth.
On the island of São Vicente, two of the nation's most iconic events take place. The **Mindelo Carnival** stands out as one of the most colourful and energetic carnivals in the Atlantic, featuring samba-inspired parades, elaborate costumes, and vibrant community participation. Also in São Vicente, the **Baía das Gatas Music Festival** is held each August under the full moon. This open-air beachside concert attracts thousands and showcases a mix of Cabo Verdean and international artists. The **Kavala Fresk Feastival**, also based in São Vicente,

is a gastronomic and cultural event dedicated to mackerel, often held in conjunction with Ocean Week, a sustainability-themed programme linked to Cabo Verde's hosting of **The Ocean Race in 2023—marking the event's first-ever stopover in West Africa**.

Santiago Island, particularly the capital Praia, plays host to two major international music events. The **Kriol Jazz Festival** celebrates Creole identity through music, bringing together artists from across the African diaspora. Closely linked to this is the **Atlantic Music Expo**, a professional platform that gathers musicians, producers, and industry stakeholders for performances, collaboration, and cultural exchange.

On Fogo Island, the town of São Filipe hosts the historic **Nhô São Filipe Festival**, celebrated from late April to early May. This traditional event blends religious ceremonies with horse races, music concerts, and communal gatherings. In the nearby rural community of Campanas de Baixo, the **Banderona Festival** takes place each February and is considered one of the island's most culturally significant flag festivals. It is characterised by symbolic rituals, traditional drumming, food preparation, and strong participation from the Cabo Verdean diaspora.

These diverse events reflect the unique cultural character of each island while contributing to Cabo Verde's broader strategy to diversify tourism. They offer opportunities to stimulate the creative economy, promote inter-island mobility, and reinforce national identity.

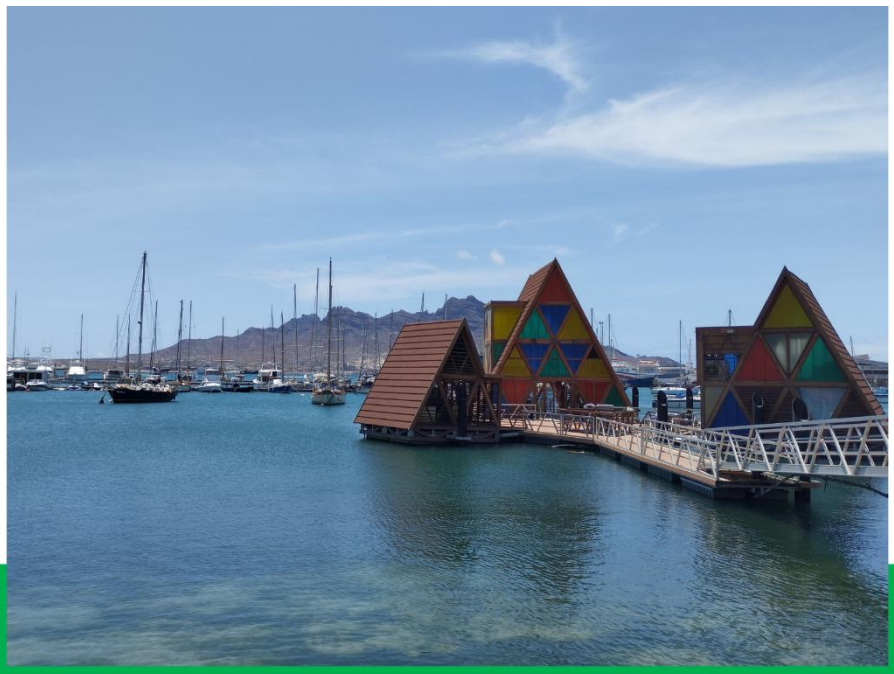
Continued investment in infrastructure, event promotion, and local capacity will be key to strengthening this growing sector and positioning Cabo Verde as a leading cultural tourism hub in the Atlantic.

Kavala Fresk Feastival, in São Vicente Island
Photo: Kavala Fresk Feastival Facebook, 2005

A genuine opportunity exists to expand maritime tourism beyond cruise-based activities

Cabo Verde, particularly the island of São Vicente, has significant **natural potential for the development of marine sports tourism**, thanks to favourable ocean conditions, a stable climate, and a suitable geography. This form of tourism is regarded as a strategic alternative to diversify the country's current offering, which remains heavily focused on the 'sun and beach' model, especially as cruise tourism continues to grow significantly. Marine sports tourism can deliver higher value experiences, is less dependent on seasonality, and attracts niche markets interested in activities such as **sailing, diving, sport fishing, surfing, and open-water swimming**.

However, several **challenges** hinder the full development of this potential. These include the **lack of dedicated public policies, inadequate nautical infrastructure, a shortage of qualified professionals, and limited international promotion of Cabo Verde as a marine sports destination**. For this sector to contribute effectively to sustainable development, investment is needed in professional training, clear regulation, investment incentives, and the involvement of local communities in the process (Semedo and Melo, 2019).



Mindelo harbour, in São Vicente Island, Cabo Verde
Photo: Cultivar Project, 2025

On the other hand, **cruise tourism in Cabo Verde has experienced substantial growth** since 2021. According to data from ENAPOR (Ports of Cabo Verde) and international cruise operators, the **number of passengers at Porto Grande doubled between 2022 and 2023, with continued growth recorded in 2024**. This progress has been supported by the

modernisation of port infrastructure, most notably the **new cruise terminal in Mindelo**, which was officially inaugurated in the summer of 2025.

According to a 2024 study by the OTISCEE - Tourism Observatory of ISCEE (Lopes *et al.*, 2024), the **typical cruise tourist visiting São Vicente is predominantly** a retired individual **from Germany or the United States**, with a high level of education and a medium-to-high household income. Most travellers arrive in family or friendship groups and are motivated by a desire to discover new cultures, enjoy nature, and seek adventure—reflecting a preference for authentic and enriching experiences beyond conventional mass tourism. Although the majority were visiting São Vicente for the first time, overall satisfaction levels were high, and many expressed a strong likelihood of recommending the destination to others. This highlights significant potential for repeat visits and long-term loyalty, particularly if the island continues to invest in high-quality, culturally meaningful tourism offerings.

Scuba diving tourism may unlock the great potential of maritime and underwater heritage for sustainable development

__CONCLUSION

Today, **underwater archaeological sites** have increasingly become recognised as **valuable tourist attractions.** A shipwreck is not merely a relic of the past; it is simultaneously a vestige of history, a museum artefact in situ, and a direct testimony to technological advancement. Moreover, the depth and inaccessibility of these sites act as a natural catalyst for adventure, adding to their appeal. Wreck diving has, as a result, become a distinct specialism within recreational and sports diving.

Emerging global trends—such as **Blue Tourism**—are broadening the appeal of maritime heritage to wider audiences, including those without diving skills, who can now engage with the underwater world through glass-bottom boats, bathyscopes, or through immersive technologies such as virtual and augmented reality. In various parts of the world, sunken ships and underwater structures have been converted into submerged archaeological parks, accessible via guided tours and supported by interpretive materials and controlled visitation protocols. These models illustrate effective frameworks

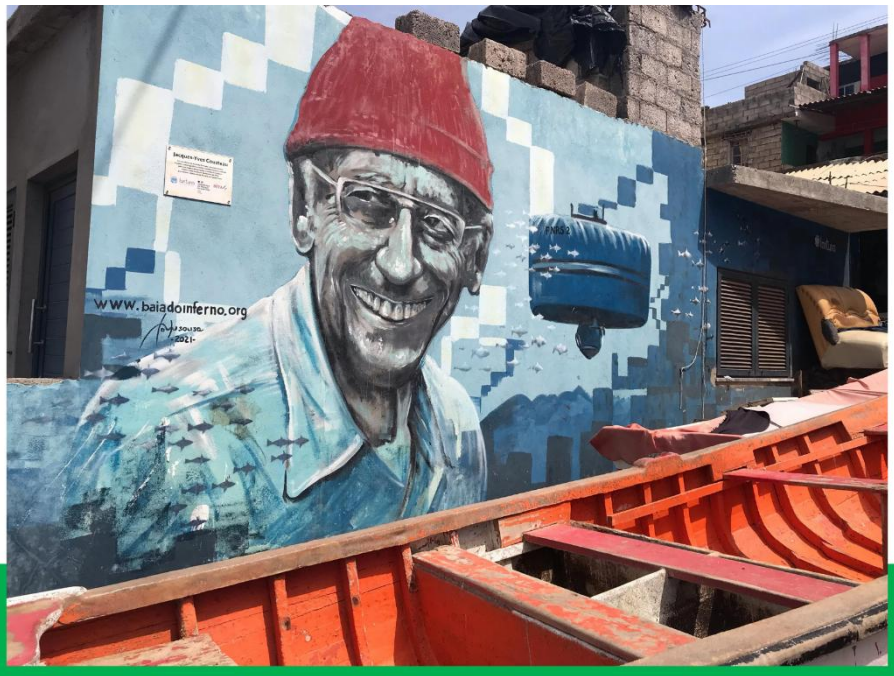
Archaeological diving in Cabo Verde
Photo: Wlodzimierz Józef Szymaniak, 2016

for balancing conservation, accessibility, and public engagement (Manglis *et al.*, 2021).

The underwater cultural heritage of the Cabo Verde archipelago is particularly remarkable for its richness and uniqueness. Its **geographic and climatic conditions allow diving activities to take place almost year-round, offering considerable potential for sustainable tourism**. Yet, diving tourism remains in its infancy and is primarily concentrated on the more touristic islands of Sal and Boa Vista. There are currently no alternative activities for non-divers, such as glass-bottom boat excursions or bathyscope experiences.

Tour operators, in general, are ill-prepared to offer heritage-themed visits and often lack knowledge regarding the underwater archaeological artefacts dispersed across the seabed. As previously noted, there is a **pressing need to develop interpretative materials, enhance public engagement tools, and ensure that heritage sites are appropriately studied, protected, and made accessible**. The anchorage area of Ribeira Grande de Santiago—a UNESCO World Heritage Site—is a prime example of this untapped potential. It hosts numerous historical traces, including anchors, ceramics, artillery remains, and possibly entire shipwreck contexts (Bettencourt *et al.*, 2020).

Another promising dimension for future tourism valorisation is the **symbolic and literary value associated with maritime heritage**. The relationship between underwater heritage and both Cabo Verdean and global literature remains largely unexplored. Celebrated authors such as Jules Verne and Charles Baudelaire have drawn inspiration from the sea, and such connections could enrich thematic storytelling and interpretative narratives for visitors.



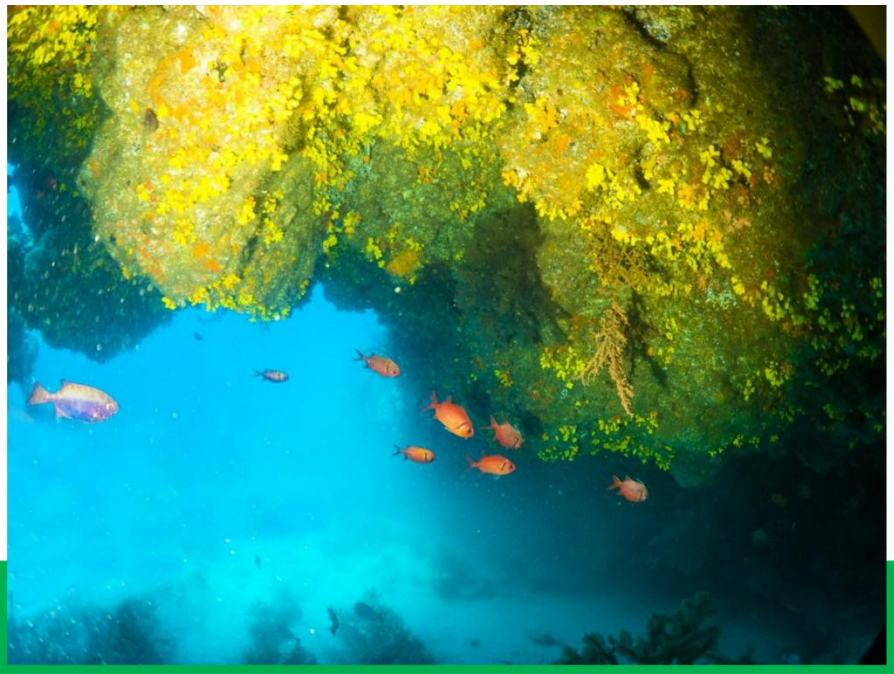
Mural of the diver Jacques Yves-Cousteau, in Mosquito Port, Cabo Verde
Photo: Cultivar Project, 2025

The marine environment of Cabo Verde is also noteworthy for its spectacular underwater landscapes, which often coincide with archaeological features. These sites, typically located near reefs—dangerous for navigation but highly attractive for diving—**combine natural biodiversity with cultural depth,** enhancing their experiential and educational value.

Underwater cultural and natural heritage is present across several of Cabo Verde's islands. However, only **two sites have been formally developed as tourist attractions**: the **Coral Bay underwater trail** (Enseada de Coral) on the island of São Vicente, and the **wreck of the *Cabo de Santa Maria***, a Spanish cargo vessel that ran aground in 1968 on Atalanta Beach, on the island of Boa Vista. The partially submerged remains of the ship, now integrated into the coastal landscape, are visited by divers and snorkellers who explore its structure and the surrounding marine life. The site has become both a visual landmark and a tangible testimony to the island's history of navigation and trade.

Several other locations offer equally compelling potential: The Aéropostale seaplane base at Calheta de São Martinho (housing an entire aircraft wreck); Cape Mangrade on the island of Santo Antão; Cavalo Reef in Santo Antão (with shipwreck); Ponta Escorregadeiro in São Nicolau (with shipwreck); João Valente Bank, the largest reef in the North Atlantic.

These sites are unified by the coexistence of archaeological remains and richly biodiverse underwater landscapes. Many also carry literary or symbolic significance. The Aéropostale hydrobase, for instance, is steeped in the mythos of early French aviation. Cape Mangrade, meanwhile, marks the symbolic



Santo Reef, in Baía do Inferno e do Monte Angra National Park, Santiago Island. Photo: Wlodzimierz Józef Szymaniak, 2021

"finisterra" — the westernmost point of Cabo Verde and of the African continent.

Despite being described by Jacques-Yves Cousteau and known internationally, João Valente Bank remains virtually unknown to the Cabo Verdean public. Only recently has the NGO Biosfera undertaken preliminary exploratory work there, with the intention of designating the area as a marine protected area—a strategy proven effective elsewhere for ensuring conservation, education, and sustainable visitation.

In addition to its underwater sites, Boa Vista is also home to the *Museu dos Náufragos (Shipwrecks Museum)* – the only museum of its kind in Cabo Verde – which was conceived by Italian archaeologist Maurizio Rossi and inaugurated in 2019. It features artefacts and narratives related to historical shipwrecks, piracy, the transatlantic slave trade, and the cultural exchanges that have shaped the archipelago.

To summarise, **Cabo Verde possesses a vast and largely untapped underwater cultural heritage that holds great promise for sustainable development**. By adopting international best practices—such as the creation of marine protected areas, the training of specialised guides, and the development of interpretative content rooted in cultural and literary narratives—the country can position itself at the forefront of responsible marine tourism. Furthermore, the **integration of digital** technologies, including augmented reality (AR), virtual reality (VR), and interactive virtual tours, can significantly **enhance accessibility** and engagement for both divers and non-divers alike. These tools not only help protect fragile sites by reducing physical impact, but also broaden public

appreciation and educational reach. Through a strategic and sustainable approach, Cabo Verde can transform its submerged heritage into a dynamic and inclusive pillar of year-round cultural and ecological tourism.

Continuous monitoring of the tourism sector is crucial for promoting sustainable development and shaping effective public policies

The **progress made by Cabo Verde's National Institute of Statistics (INE) in developing tourism data systems deserves recognition**. Its efforts in regularly publishing statistics on tourist arrivals, overnight stays, and visitor demographics have contributed significantly to evidence-based planning and transparency in the sector. These data provide a foundation for assessing performance and guiding national strategies such as PEDS II and the GOPEDS-Tourism plan. This **monitoring work must be sustained and continuously strengthened to ensure it keeps pace with the evolving needs of the tourism sector**.

However, as tourism in Cabo Verde becomes more diversified—with growth in segments like cultural events, cruise tourism, and inter-island mobility—there is **a clear need to consolidate and expand the current statistical framework**. Crucial gaps remain in the monitoring of emerging sectors such as event tourism, community-based experiences, and nature-based activities. Without reliable, disaggregated data by island, tourism type, and season, it is difficult to evaluate whether strategic goals—such as equitable distribution of benefits or sustainability—are being achieved.

It is equally important to enhance the integration of tourism data into policy formulation, ensuring timely coordination between INE, tourism authorities, municipalities, and private operators.

In this context, the work of the **OTISCEE - Tourism Observatory of ISCEE plays an increasingly valuable role**. By conducting applied research, visitor surveys, and local-level diagnostics—as seen in its 2024 cruise tourism profile study in Mindelo—the observatory contributes knowledge that complements national statistics with grounded, qualitative insights.

Looking ahead, **Cabo Verde should consider investing in the integration** of its tourism monitoring efforts **into the UNWTO International Network of Sustainable Tourism Observatories (INSTO)**. Joining this global framework would strengthen the country's capacity to track tourism impacts across

economic, environmental, and social dimensions, while aligning national practices with international standards and best practices for sustainable tourism management.

In conclusion, while existing efforts provide a strong starting point, Cabo Verde must continue to invest in robust, multi-level tourism monitoring systems that not only support national decision-making but also promote long-term sustainability, resilience, and inclusion across all islands.

3.6. Local Food Products

DESCRIPTION__

Cabo Verde's food culture is the result of a colonial construction shaped by four continents

Cabo Verde's **food system is profoundly shaped by its insular and arid geograph**y, **Portuguese colonisation**, and a high dependence on food imports. Despite environmental and structural constraints, the country has developed a resilient and deeply rooted food culture, grounded in traditional agricultural practices and local ingredients.

The traditional **Cabo Verdean diet centres on locally grown staples** such as **maize, beans, sweet potatoes, cassava, yams, kale, and fresh fish**. Among these, maize (*Zea mays*) and beans, cultivated through rainfed agriculture (dependent solely on rainfall), are key to food security in rural areas—especially on the island of Santiago (Kaufmann and Kubo, 2018).

A rich variety of traditional dishes reflects this culinary heritage. The **national dish**, ***cachupa***, is a hearty stew made from semi-crushed maize, beans, and tubers, enriched with vegetables and, depending on availability, meat (particularly salted pork) or fish. Additional key dishes are: ***Xerém*** – coarsely ground maize, cooked and typically served with fish, meat, or vegetables; ***Cuscuz*** – fine maize flour, steamed and commonly eaten with butter, melasse, or milk; ***Camoca*** – toasted and finely ground maize flour, used in porridge or as a dessert ingredient; ***Djagacida*** – a savoury dish made from maize bran, combined with meat and vegetables; ***Fidjós*** – sweet fritters made from banana, maize flour, and egg; ***Maize-based breads and cakes*** – traditional breakfast items made with fine maize flour; **Fried moray eel**; **Grilled tuna** and ***Caldo de peixe*** - a stew made of a variety of fish and vegetables.

These dishes are still consumed weekly and represent essential expressions of Cabo Verdean identity. The **native "midju di tera"** (local maize variety) is especially valued by farmers for its taste and texture.

Cachupa. Photo Xandu, 2008
Available in Wikemedia Commons, Public Domain

Cabo Verde's culinary landscape has also been **shaped by historical exchanges during the colonial period**. The islands served as a key trading post in the transatlantic slave trade and an agricultural testing ground for the Portuguese.

Several crops were introduced through these networks: **maize and beans** from the Americas; **sugarcane**, originally from Asia and introduced to Cabo Verde via the Azores; and **banana, papaya, cassava, coffee, coconut, guava, and mango** from various regions (Ferreira *et al.*, 2017; Nunes, 2019).

Maize (*Zea mays*) **and beans were introduced to Cabo Verde between the 16th and 17th centuries as part of Portuguese colonial efforts to acclimate New World crops**. Promoted as cheap, easy to store, energy-rich staples for enslaved and servile populations, they became the dietary foundation for the poor by the 18th and 19th centuries. The colonial social hierarchy restricted access to more nutritious foods, leading to a diet lacking in essential vitamins and proteins. While effective for basic survival, this dependency contributed to malnutrition and diseases like pellagra, especially during droughts. In good harvest years, maize was often exported to Portugal, worsening local food insecurity (Sant'Ana and Serra, 2013).

The presence of goats on the islands of Santo Antão and São Nicolau has been documented since at least the 16th century, associated with leather production (Matos, 1997; Correia e Silva and Leão, 2002). From the mid-19th to the early 20th century, **goat herding** became more widespread across Cabo Verde. While

most goat meat and hides were exported or sold to ships, local consumption was limited. **Goat milk**, however, was used in household diets, often combined with maize to address nutritional deficiencies. Overgrazing by goats contributed to soil erosion and worsening aridity, concerns already noted by colonial authorities at the time (Sant'Ana and Serra, 2013).

Only four islands—Santiago, Santo Antão, Fogo, and São Nicolau—are suitable for agriculture. Even there, food production depends heavily on seasonal rainfall and faces frequent instability. Drought years can severely reduce yields and compromise rural food security (Kaufmann and Kubo, 2018).

Today, the legacy of these historical developments continues to influence agricultural capacity and food security across the archipelago.

To compensate for low and unstable local production, **around 70% of Cabo Verde's food supply is imported**, particularly **rice**, **wheat**, **powdered milk**, and **vegetable oil**.

This evolving food landscape reveals a paradox in current practices: while **traditional dishes continue to be valued and consumed in rural areas**, there has been a marked increase in the consumption of imported and **processed foods in urban zones** (Cabral *et al.*, 2019). This shift is associated with declining diet quality and rising rates of non-communicable diseases such as obesity and hypertension (Okyere-Ayebeng *et al.*, 2025).

Public policies have attempted to reverse this trend by promoting local food production and improving agricultural infrastructure. However, the sector remains underfunded, and structural challenges—such as limited arable land, water scarcity, and climate vulnerability—persist. Another challenge is lack of trained human resources in the sector which is traditionally conservative and resistant to innovation. Despite HEIs rich offer in graduate and pos-graduate courses (cf. Uni-CV diverse degrees in agriculture and forestry) there is little interest in these fields among youth.

Cheese plays a significant role in Cabo Verde's food system, particularly in rural communities and **on islands with strong pastoral traditions** such as **Maio, Fogo, Santo Antão and Santiago**. Predominantly made from goat's milk, traditional Cabo Verdean cheese — often referred to locally as "keju di tera" — represents not only a nutritional staple but also a product deeply embedded in the country's cultural, economic, and ecological fabric.

This significance is further underscored by the development of targeted knowledge resources, notably the ***Manual do Queijo*** (Jurisic David and David, 2020), a technical guide that documents traditional production practices while establishing hygiene and safety standards to support quality and market access.

Goat farm, in São Vicente Island, Cabo Verde
Photo: Cultivar Project, 2025

At a national level, cheese remains one of the most important dairy products, especially in regions where fresh milk cannot be easily preserved or transported.

In places like Ribeira Dom João (Maio Island), the creation of semi-industrial cheese dairies, combined with improved hygiene, packaging and marketing practices, has elevated the product's food safety and commercial appeal — particularly in the context of local and sustainable tourism development.

Cheese in Cabo Verde is a vehicle of cultural heritage, empowering women and rural families, while serving as a key component of food security strategies in remote areas. Its role in promoting sustainable livelihoods and preserving traditional knowledge makes it a vital contributor to the country's broader agri-food landscape.

Cabo Verdean gastronomy, with its **Creole roots and diverse African, Portuguese, and American influences**, stands as a vibrant expression of cultural identity and holds significant economic potential. Staples like maize and beans endure not only due to their adaptability but also their deep cultural resonance.

Cabo Verde's food system, shaped by hardship and adaptation, is ultimately a living testimony to the resilience of its people.

CULTIVAR Project n. 101179293
Co-funded by the European Union

Cabo Verde's agri-food sector presents a unique and complex landscape

A combination of geographic remoteness, erratic rainfall, and limited natural endowments continues to shape and constrain the country's agricultural development. The archipelago's **agriculture is predominantly rainfed** and oriented towards **subsistence farming**, rendering it **highly vulnerable to climatic variability**—particularly drought, which has been a recurrent challenge throughout the country's history.

In **2024**, **agriculture — including forestry and fishing — accounted for approximately 4.70% of GDP**, according to data from the World Bank, and has not exceeded 5% over the past three years. It should be underlined that Cabo Verde stands out in Africa as a markedly urban society with over 74% of its population classified as urban (2020 Census).

Despite its low contribution to GDP, **agriculture remains crucial to the livelihoods of approximately 60% of the rural population** (Monteiro *et al*., 2020). The country's mountainous terrain, shallow and stony soils, and the absence of permanent freshwater sources pose significant constraints to agricultural development. Rainfed farming dominates the national system, covering approximately 91% of the total agricultural area.

Cabo Verde's **principal locally produced food items** include: **rainfed staples** such as **maize** (*Zea mays*), a variety of **beans** (e.g., *Cajanus cajan, Vigna unguiculata, Phaseolus vulgaris*), **cassava** (*Manihot esculenta*), and **sweet potato** (*Ipomoea batatas*); **irrigated crops** including **sugarcane** (*Saccharum officinarum*)—widely used in the production of the national alcoholic beverage "grog"—as well as **tomatoes**, **onions**, **carrots**, potatoes, **cabbage**, and **banana** (*Musa spp*.); and a range of **fruits and niche crops**, such as **mango**, **papaya**, **avocado**, **citrus**, **coffee**, and, in some areas, **grapes and pomegranate** (Monteiro *et al.*, 2020).

Each island contributes distinct strengths to the mosaic of national agricultural production, as will be outlined below, based on the comprehensive analysis provided by Monteiro *et al*. (2020).

Among the ten inhabited islands, **Santiago stands out as the agricultural heart of Cabo Verde, accounting for over 52% of the country's cultivated land.** Here, staple crops such as maize, beans, cassava, sweet potato, and mango are widely grown under rainfed conditions. Irrigated plots are mainly used for sugarcane, tomatoes, onions, carrots, and banana production.

Santo Antão, the **second most agriculturally active island** (16% of national agricultural area), exhibits a diversified system. Rainfed crops include maize, beans, coffee, and a variety of fruits like mango and citrus, while irrigated fields support banana, sugarcane, horticultural vegetables, and yam.

Mango tree, Cabo Verde
Photo: Cultivar Project, 2025

Fogo, **representing 15.8% of agricultural land**, is notable for its production of coffee, grapes, figs, pomegranate, and other temperate fruits, in addition to the usual staples. While the island has minimal irrigated agriculture, some cabbage, banana, and yam cultivation occurs with water support.

Smaller islands such as **São Nicolau, Brava, and Maio** contribute to agricultural output with a mix of rainfed maize and beans, along with some irrigated vegetables and roots and tubers. **São Nicolau** is noteworthy for its nearly even split between rainfed and irrigated cultivation. Conversely, the eastern islands of **Sal and Boavista**, due to their extreme aridity and desert-like landscapes, **contribute insignificantly** to national agriculture.

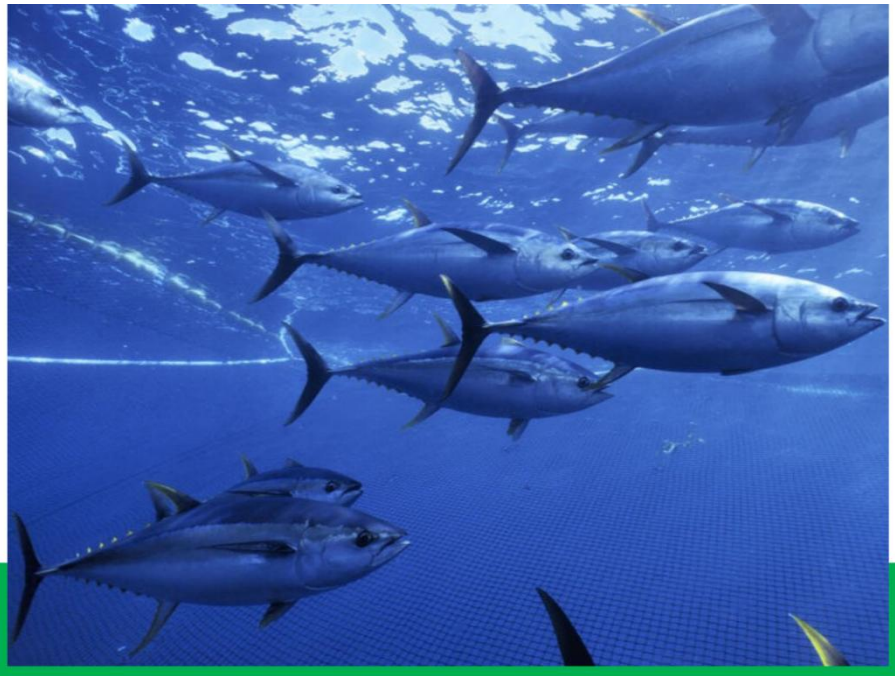
Agriculture in Cabo Verde is predominantly based on rainfed subsistence farming, with **maize and pulses (especially beans) occupying the largest share of cultivated land**. However, due to erratic rainfall, these crops tend to have low yields. In contrast, **irrigated crops such as sugarcane** and tomatoes—cultivated on smaller plots—**are primarily geared towards the commercial market** and achieve significantly higher productivity. **Recent statistical data confirm sugarcane as the country's leading agricultural commodity in terms of market value**, followed by tomatoes, pulses, maize, and cassava (Monteiro *et al*., 2020).

CULTIVAR Project n. 101179293
Co-funded by the European Union

The country has made important legal and strategic commitments to food security and sustainable agriculture. The cornerstone is **Law No. 37/IX/2018**, which legally enshrines the **right to adequate food**, guiding public policies aimed at ensuring availability, access, and stability in food systems.

Cabo Verde's **fisheries sector** plays a crucial economic and social role, **contributing over 80% of national exports** (United Nations, 2025), with processed fish products—primarily **tuna**—making up **around 72% of the country's total export value** in 2019, valued at approximately USD 61 million. The sector is divided into industrial, semi-industrial, and artisanal segments, with annual catches estimated at 19,363 tonnes for industrial fleets and around 3,000 tonnes from artisanal fisheries (Wabnitz *et al.*, 2023).

Key species include **skipjack and yellowfin tuna**, widely processed for export; **small pelagic** fish such as **mackerel and horse mackerel**, consumed locally; and the **Cabo Verde red lobster** (*Palinurus charlestoni*), an endemic species now considered near-threatened due to overfishing. **Fish is the primary source of animal protein in the national diet**, forming the **basis for culturally significant dishes** like ***caldo de peixe*** and ***cachupa***.



Yellowfin Tuna (*Thunnus albacares*)
Photo: Worldwildlife.org

The country is committed to transforming its traditional fisheries sector through the blue economy, aiming to combine environmental sustainability, social inclusion, and economic growth. One of the most transformative initiatives is the Blue-X platform, which facilitated the issuance of "blue" and social bonds through the national stock exchange, raising over €14 million to support coastal micro-entrepreneurs—90% of whom are women. Youth and women

have also been empowered through incubation programmes like IDEA APP CV, supporting sustainable innovations such as Plant'Agu, a water-saving biofertiliser (United Nations, 2025).

Fisheries are regulated under Decree-Law 2/2020, mandating licences, closed seasons, and combating illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing. The **National Fisheries Council** (CNP) coordinates policy and planning, including a proposed national master plan (Ministério do Mar, 2023). New strategies—like **Cabo Verde's first national action plan to combat IUU fishing**—are in **development with FAO support** (FAO, 2024).

Agriculture and fisheries in Cabo Verde face structural constraints and heightened climate vulnerability

__ANALYSIS

Cabo Verde's **agricultural sector** is characterised by **low productivity and limited growth**, with performance levels far below those of the secondary and tertiary sectors. It contributes only around **5% of GDP** while employing approximately 14% of the labour force. According to a World Bank report (2023), between 2016 and 2019, agricultural productivity declined significantly, further widening the gap between Cabo Verde and its aspirational peer countries. This low productivity is largely attributed to the sector's dependence on rainfall, the lack of modern irrigation systems, informality, and limited adoption of technology.

The **fisheries sector** faces **similar structural barriers**. While the country has access to a vast exclusive economic zone, its **marine fertility is only moderate**, and the **capacity for sustainable exploitation is underutilised**. Both fishing and aquaculture remain constrained by inadequate infrastructure, logistical inefficiencies between islands, and the absence of value-adding supply chains. The fisheries sector also faces **other challenges**, including a high degree of unpredictability, seasonality, perishability of the fishery product, risks associated with the activity, and a low educational level among most operators (González *et al.*, 2020).

Both agriculture and fisheries are highly exposed to climate vulnerability. The agricultural sector suffers from frequent droughts, erratic rainfall, and soil degradation. Meanwhile, marine ecosystems and fish stocks are increasingly threatened by ocean warming and acidification, which directly affect species

availability and ecological stability. The estimates indicate that climate-related events could result in average annual economic losses equivalent to around 1% of GDP, with flooding accounting for nearly 70% of these losses. Rainfed agriculture, lacking in adaptive capacity, becomes increasingly unsustainable in this context.

A major constraint for food production in Cabo Verde is market fragmentation and logistical inefficiencies. There is a **disconnect between agricultural production zones**—located primarily in Santiago, Fogo, and Santo Antão—**and the key consumption hubs** of Sal, Boa Vista, and São Vicente. **This** disconnection **undermines the ability of local producers to supply hotels and restaurants in the tourism sector**, which import roughly 80% of the food they use, including fish and fresh vegetables. Moreover, **approximately 30% of local produce is rejected due to not meeting the quality and certification standards** required by large hotel chains. The **lack of reliable cold chain infrastructure**, **irregular maritime links**, and **limited logistics integration** severely restrict the full potential of both the agricultural and fisheries value chains.

To address these challenges, the World Bank proposes a comprehensive set of reform proposals, including: the establishment of local supplier development programmes to **connect small producers with tourism supply chains**; **investments in logistics and port infrastructure**, with a focus on cold storage and consolidation centres; **modernisation** of agricultural and fisheries systems, including the introduction of efficient irrigation methods, quality certification schemes, and improved production practices; provision of **training and capacity-building** for producers in areas such as technical

Irrigated agriculture. Photo: Ministério da Agricultura e do Ambiente de Cavo Verde. Available in maa.gov.cv

operations, management, marketing, and negotiation; creation of **financial incentives and** expanded **access to credit**, especially targeting cooperatives and micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises in the primary sector.

Some **measures have been taken by the government to address food insecurity**. In **2023**, the **Food Security Crisis Preparedness Plan** (FSCPP) was launched. This plan establishes an early warning system and emergency coordination protocols to protect vulnerable populations during food crises (World Bank, 2023). **Urban and peri-urban agriculture projects** have also been implemented, aiming to improve nutritional security, reduce poverty, and generate local income, with support from the FAO and local partners (FAO, 2021). Food insecurity and agricultural vulnerability were identified as key risks in a national assessment conducted by the Partnership for Agricultural Risk Management (PARM). The PARM process in Cabo Verde was implemented from 2015 to 2019, resulting in a range of activities that facilitated the integration of Agricultural Risk Management (ARM) into the national policy framework. In response to these challenges, the government has implemented several integrated plans. The **National Food and Nutrition Plan (2015–2020)** focused on tackling undernutrition, micronutrient deficiencies, and the growing issue of obesity (CGIAR - Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research, 2021). Additionally, the **Strategic Plan for Agricultural Research (PE-SNIA)** aims to align scientific innovation with national food security and climate resilience goals (CGIAR, 2021).

Cabo Verde's fisheries sector, although essential for exports, employment, and food security, **remains heavily reliant on external actors**, particularly foreign fleets operating under formal agreements. Through successive **Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreements with the European Union**, **currently in effect for the 2024–2029 period**, dozens of EU-flagged vessels—primarily from Spain, Portugal, and France—are authorised to fish within Cabo Verde's Exclusive Economic Zone, with an annual catch limit of up to 7,000 tonnes. In return, the EU provides financial contributions aimed at supporting fisheries governance and strengthening local capacity, although domestic value retention remains limited.

Processing infrastructure, cold storage, and landing facilities are concentrated in a few urban hubs such as Mindelo, Praia, and Sal, **leaving many smaller or less-populated islands underserved and disconnected from stable fish supply**

chains. This uneven distribution of facilities not only hinders local consumption and economic diversification but also exacerbates **dependence on exports and imported processed seafood**.

Cabo Verde has a stable tuna catch potential of between 20,000 and 30,000 tonnes, yet currently only around 5,000 tonnes are being fished, with a further 8,000 tonnes allocated to the European Union under fisheries agreements (IPNLF, 2023).

Tuna fishing in Cabo Verde is carried out both by artisanal fishers (using handlines) **and by semi-industrial and industrial vessels**, with artisanal fishers supplying local processing facilities directly. In order to reach full production capacity, the Cabo Verdean government is seeking to improve the technical capabilities of the national fishing fleet.

At present, **only two tuna processing plants are operational in the country**: SUCLA, located on São Nicolau, which has been in operation since 1935; and Frescomar (part of the Ubago Group), based on São Vicente. The latter is the largest private employer in the country. These factories primarily process tuna and mackerel caught in Cabo Verdean waters, although they also handle fish from other fishing grounds.

Fishermen in Mindelo harbour, in São Vicente Island, Cabo Verde
Photo: Cultivar Project, 2025

A third facility, Atunlo, also located on São Vicente and inaugurated in 2015, has been closed since early 2024 due to operational difficulties.

Processing remains limited and largely carried out by small-scale canneries. Many factories do not operate at full capacity due to insufficient supply of raw fish, and **in some cases, tuna is exported without undergoing local processing**.

At the same time, **concerns over overfishing and environmental sustainability are growing**, as climate variability and declining

fish catches put additional pressure on already fragile marine ecosystems. Cabo Verde's **ability to monitor and manage its fisheries is constrained** by limited infrastructure, scarce data, and continued reliance on international cooperation, making it difficult to fully assert control over its maritime resources or maximise their socio-economic potential (World Bank and European Commission).

Traditional systems and sustainable innovation can contribute to reducing food insecurity and strengthening national resilience

According to the FAO, **Cabo Verde is among the African nations that regularly require external food assistance**. This is primarily due to its low agricultural productivity, which is severely limited by drought-prone conditions, poor soils, and small-scale subsistence farming systems (Monteiro *et al.,* 2020). Moreover, **only 10–15% of food consumed in Cabo Verde is produced locally**, leading to heavy reliance on food imports, which exacerbates **vulnerability to external price shocks and global supply chain disruptions** (Brilhante *et al.*, 2021).

To address the limits of rainfed agriculture, **Cabo Verde has invested in small-scale irrigation**, though coverage remains low and vulnerable to rainfall variability, with only 14% of plots irrigated (Monteiro *et al.*, 2020). Recent **innovations like hydroponics** (on Sal Island), particularly for the hospitality sector, reflect a shift toward more sustainable, water-efficient, and climate-resilient farming practices.

Farm in Santiago Island, Cabo Verde
Photo: Cultivar Project, 2025

Alongside technological innovation, there is also renewed interest in traditional farming approaches. While local food production plays a fundamental role in food security, employment, and cultural identity, **traditional**

farming systems can further help reduce food insecurity and external dependence by reinforcing self-sufficiency and preserving climate-resilient practices rooted in local knowledge.

Traditional legumes such as Cajanus cajan (*pigeon pea*), Lablab purpureus (*lablab bean*), Phaseolus lunatus (*lima bean*), Phaseolus vulgaris (*common bean*), and *Vigna unguiculata* (cowpea) are widely cultivated and traded across Cabo Verde. These legumes are culturally embedded in the national cuisine, most notably in the dish "cachupa", and have high nutritional value, including essential minerals (e.g., iron and zinc), dietary fibre, and antioxidants (Brilhante *et al.*, 2021). Importantly, **native species such as lablab bean and cowpea are highly adapted to the harsh, semi-arid climate, making them ideal for sustainable cultivation in dryland farming systems**.

The strategic use of traditional legumes can help Cabo Verde address several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially SDG 2: Zero Hunger. These crops can provide affordable, nutritious food while supporting climate-resilient agriculture and reducing dependency on imported products (Duarte *et al.*, 2022). Additionally, legumes are often grown in intercropping systems with maize and millet—an age-old practice that promotes agrobiodiversity and food system resilience. This **heritage of indigenous knowledge and traditional farming systems is vital in facing modern challenges**, including climate variability and market instability (Brilhante *et al.*, 2021). By revitalising and supporting the production and consumption of traditional legumes, Cabo Verde can simultaneously bolster its nutritional self-sufficiency, ecological resilience, and cultural heritage.

Process of sun-dried fish, Cabo Verde
Photo: Cultivar Project, 2025

In this context, **revitalising traditional and small-scale fishing practices**—particularly

in underserved islands—**could strengthen food sovereignty, reduce external dependency, and contribute more directly to local food security**.

In addition to the reforms proposed by the World Bank, there is a **growing consensus that advanced training, nature-based solutions**, **sustainable farming techniques**, **and integrated adaptive policies** are **essential to address the structural challenges** of the primary sector in Cabo Verde. Additionally, continued investment in irrigation, crop diversification, and modern agricultural techniques—such as **agroforestry and intercropping**—are essential for enhancing the sector's contribution to national development and meeting the dietary needs of the population.

Local food products have strong potential for integration into the tourism sector in Cabo Verde

__CONCLUSION

Cabo Verde's **traditional food products**, such as **goat's cheese**, ***grogue*** (a sugarcane spirit), **volcanic wine**, **coffee**, **tropical fruits** including papaya, mango, banana, and watermelon, as well as **fish and seafood** like fresh tuna, octopus, lobster, shrimp and mussels, **have significant potential for integration into the country's tourism supply chain**. This aligns with the **increasing demand** among tourists **for authentic and locally sourced experiences**, as identified by the World Bank (2019). The study - *Local Sourcing in the Cabo Verde Tourism Food Supply Chain – Opportunities and Challenges* - highlights that highly perishable and high-value items, such as **fresh vegetables, seafood and tropical fruits**, could be **competitive substitutes for imported goods** if produced on consumer islands or distributed through efficient logistics networks. Products with strong cultural identity—such as **goat's cheese, *grogue*, wine and coffee**—also have **potential for gourmet positioning** and as locally branded souvenirs, provided they are supported by origin certification and quality assurance schemes.

A particularly **emblematic example is *grogue***, Cabo Verde's **traditional sugarcane aguardente**, deeply rooted in the islands' rural culture and consumed both locally and by tourists. Known variously as "grog", "grogue" or "grogu", this product is not only a cultural symbol but a potential tourism

flagship, particularly when included in tasting experiences and traditional festivities. **Its production has been formally regulated by Decree-Law No. 11/2015**, which establishes the legal regime for the production of sugarcane aguardente in Cabo Verde, aiming to improve product quality, traceability and market access. This legal framework is crucial for ensuring that the *grogue*, when integrated into tourism circuits, meets sanitary and commercial standards, and supports its potential inclusion in protected origin schemes or branding strategies for export and souvenir markets.

A concrete example of this integration logic is the "**Cheese and Shepherd Route**" on the **island of Maio**, which connects tourism circuits with cheese production, livestock farming, and cultural and environmental heritage. This initiative positions cheese as a central product within rural and sustainable tourism, highlighting its role in reinforcing local identity (Janeirinho and Mestre, 2021).

Similarly, **volcanic wines from Chã das Caldeiras** on the **island of Fogo** demonstrate **significant potential as products of Protected Designation of Origin** (PDO). As argued by Narciso and Tavares (2022), these wines could be part of a broader sustainable tourism strategy linking wine tasting, traditional gastronomy, community celebrations and cultural heritage, forming a comprehensive "winescape" experience. The researchers suggest that building an exclusive value chain for such products would not only meet high-end tourism demand but also reduce dependence on imports, strengthen food traceability, and promote the preservation of local knowledge and biodiversity.

Bottled beverages at the Mindelo Municipal Market, in São Vicente Island
Photo: Cultivar Project, 2025

Despite these opportunities, structural barriers persist.

Resorts, especially the all-inclusive type, continue to rely heavily on imported foodstuffs, due to small-scale domestic production, logistical limitations, and lack of food safety certifications. **Public health risks related to traditional food production are a key concern**. For example, *grogue* and traditional sausages, often produced in artisanal contexts, may present safety issues linked to poor hygiene practices, inadequate storage and lack of laboratory-based quality control (Vieira, 2015). Goat's cheese from the island of Fogo has shown high levels of faecal coliforms, although free from more dangerous pathogens like Salmonella and Listeria monocytogenes, indicating lapses in sanitary standards during production and handling (Tavares *et al.*, 2024). Additionally, excessive salt content found in bread produced in bakeries and restaurants in Praia and Mindelo poses a public health risk, suggesting the need for improved regulatory enforcement (Lopes *et al.*, 2022).

Cabo Verde has developed a legal and institutional framework to address food safety. The main instrument is **Legislative Decree No. 3/2009**, which established the **National Food Control System**, placing primary responsibility on operators. **Decree-Law No. 25/2009** defines **food hygiene standards** in line with *Codex Alimentarius*, while **Decree-Law No. 67/2015 regulates labelling** to ensure transparent and safe consumer information. Oversight and enforcement are now the responsibility of ERIS (**Independent Health Regulatory Authority**), which replaced ARFA and is responsible for inspections, licensing, risk monitoring and hygiene promotion. These measures are **supported by strategic plans** like the **National Strategy for Food and Nutritional Security** (ENSAN) and the **National Action Plan for**

Grains, flours and spices at the Mindelo Municipal Market, in São Vicente Island
Photo: Cultivar Project, 2025

Sanitary Safety (PNASS), reinforcing the government's commitment to ensuring safe and traceable food systems.

In the tourism sector, community-based initiatives offer a viable model for integrating local food production into visitor experiences. A study on **community-based tourism** in Fogo found that tourists showed a strong preference for using locally run restaurants and family accommodations, with over 93% expressing high satisfaction and willingness to choose such services again due to their quality and authenticity (López-Guzmán *et al.*, 2011). However, the main reasons cited for not using these services included lack of awareness and perceived higher costs. The study recommends improving digital communication and promotional tools to enhance the visibility of community-based tourism enterprises and to facilitate their integration into broader tourism networks.

Building on this, specific local food value chains are also being developed to connect agriculture with tourism more directly.

A particularly illustrative case of local food valorisation is the **banana from Santa Cruz**, on **Santiago Island**. Historically one of Cabo Verde's main banana-producing regions, Santa Cruz was the focus of a 2011 EU-funded project that reintroduced banana cultivation using *in vitro* seedlings to combat *Fusarium wilt*. Building on this foundation, a new regeneration programme launched in 2024, supported by the African Development Bank aims to restore Santa Cruz's leadership in banana production. It includes the import of resistant seedlings, installation of small-scale desalination units, and technical support for climate-resilient farming. In parallel, the

Fruits and vegetables at the Mindelo Municipal Market, in São Vicente Island
Photo: Cultivar Project, 2025

Municipality of Santa Cruz is working to transform Pedra Badejo into Cabo Verde's "banana capital", through infrastructure such as a Banana Fair Pavilion and a central purchasing hub, as well as branding and promotional events. In 2025, a banana processing unit was inaugurated in partnership with Fundación FRS and the Capuchin order, supporting a women's cooperative of 50 members producing solar-dried banana chips, combining food innovation with social empowerment. Importantly, the initiative also enhances agro-tourism: visitors can explore Cabo Verde's largest banana plantation in Pedra Badejo through guided agricultural tours, walking trails, and local market visits, often paired with beach and cultural experiences. This integrated strategy exemplifies how traditional crops can be revitalised as economic, social, and touristic assets within a sustainable development framework.

Efforts to obtain European geographical indications (GIs) or Protected Designations of Origin (PDO) remain limited in Cabo Verde. Although no product is currently registered under the EU Ambrosia portal, initiatives like the Chã das Caldeiras wine project offer an opportunity to change this. Integrating wine and other traditional agri-food products into the tourism sector through GIs can generate sustainable socioeconomic benefits. These include reinforcing cultural identity, promoting traceability, building institutional capacity and creating linkages between producers, the hospitality industry and consumers. However, the success of such initiatives depends on a coordinated strategy across various sectors, including education, innovation, and infrastructure, and must account for external vulnerabilities such as climate events, pandemics and geopolitical instability.

Cabo Verde is thus uniquely positioned to leverage its rich culinary heritage and biodiverse landscape to create a distinctive tourism offer centred on local food. This would not only meet the rising global demand for meaningful and sustainable travel experiences but also create value for local communities, reduce dependency on imports, and strengthen national food security. Unlocking this potential will require a holistic and participatory approach—centred on certification, quality control, local empowerment, and resilient food systems.

4. SWOT analysis: Conclusions and Recommendations

Through a comprehensive collective analysis and consultations with local, regional, and national stakeholders, this document goes beyond a purely desk-based review of existing data. It offers a broader perspective on the key assets and opportunities within the territory, as well as the challenges that hinder local development and progress.

A SWOT analysis was carried out for each archipelago individually and organised in a systematic table.

This analysis will be further developed in Work Package 4 (WP4) of the CULTIVAR project, which aims to support the development of cultural initiatives. As part of this process, focus groups will be held with local stakeholders, alongside workshops designed to foster interdisciplinary cultural project planning.

SÃO TOMÉ E PRÍNCIPE SWOT ANALYSIS	
STRENGTHS	**WEAKNESSES**
✓ **Rich biodiversity and endemic ecosystems**, including tropical rainforests, natural parks, and globally significant ecological habitats. ✓ **Diverse and vibrant cultural heritage**, characterised by historic plantations (roças), Creole languages, traditional dances, and intangible expressions such as *Tchiloli*. ✓ **High tourism potential**, especially in ecotourism, cultural and marine tourism, with Príncipe Island recognised as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve.	✓ **Poor infrastructure**, including deteriorated roads, lack of cruise port facilities, and a limited-capacity airport, which restrict tourism development and service access. ✓ **Heavy reliance on external aid**, with over 97% of public investment funded through debt or international cooperation. ✓ **Limited institutional capacity**, with public cultural and environmental bodies facing staff shortages and technical constraints.

✓ **Active community-based initiatives**, such as Programa Tatô and CACAU, which combine cultural promotion, conservation, and local development. ✓ **Recent public policy improvements**, including updated park management plans, the new Cultural Policy Charter, and the National Blue Economy Strategy.	✓ **Fragile productive sector**, with an informal economy dominating, limited diversification, and persistent food insecurity. ✓ **Under-documented and underutilised cultural heritage**, with much of the intangible heritage not yet inventoried, and an underdeveloped museum network.
OPPORTUNITIES	**THREATS**
✓ **UNESCO nominations**, both for cultural and natural sites, offering visibility, prestige, and potential funding. ✓ **Growth in sustainable tourism**, aligned with global trends favouring authentic, ecological destinations. ✓ **Innovative financing tools**, such as debt-for-nature swaps and the proposed national cultural fund. ✓ **Expanding educational and training programmes**, including the new School of Hospitality and Tourism and upcoming postgraduate heritage studies. ✓ **Emerging tourism markets**, including Lusophone countries, international ecotourism, and volunteer-based travel.	✓ **Climate change and environmental vulnerability**, with rising sea levels, biodiversity loss, and agricultural instability posing major risks. ✓ **Ongoing economic fragility**, including high public debt, inflation, and limited job creation. ✓ **Territorial inequalities**, with rural and peripheral areas at risk of exclusion from tourism and development gains. ✓ **Risk of unmanaged mass tourism**, which could threaten the environment and cultural identity if not properly regulated. ✓ **Continued external dependency**, particularly on food imports and international aid, undermining national resilience and sovereignty.

CABO VERDE SWOT ANALYSIS	
STRENGTHS	**WEAKNESSES**
✓ **Cabo Verde has a rich cultural diversity**, with **UNESCO-recognised** practices such as **Morna** music and **Cidade Velha**. ✓ **The country's network of museums and cultural centres is expanding,** supported by public investment and international cooperation aimed at renovation and modernisation. ✓ **The archipelago hosts a high level of biodiversity**, with unique endemic species and designated natural protected areas. ✓ **Tourism is the country's largest economic sector** and has a significant impact on employment. ✓ **Public policies** in heritage, biodiversity, and sustainable tourism have been **recently updated and strengthened**. ✓ **Cabo Verde is actively aligned with international conventions** (e.g., UNESCO), reinforcing global cooperation. ✓ **Community-led programmes are promoting cultural and tourism development** through local participation and capacity building.	✓ **There is overdependence on sun-and-beach tourism**, geographically concentrated on Sal and Boa Vista islands. ✓ **Cultural and natural infrastructure remains uneven across islands**, with limited accessibility in some areas. ✓ **Institutional capacity for managing protected areas and cultural heritage remains insufficient**. ✓ **Collaboration between national universities and cultural or tourism institutions remains limited** and somewhat fragmented. ✓ **Cultural and environmental initiatives often operate with limited** and intermittent **financial support**. ✓ **The country's underwater cultural heritage remains largely undervalued** and vulnerable to looting. ✓ **Social and territorial inequalities persist**, especially between rural and urban areas.

✓ **The economy is service-oriented and resilient**, with strong post-COVID recovery indicators. ✓ **Diaspora remittances provide critical financial support** to the local economy. ✓ **A strong national identity is rooted in Creole heritage** and vibrant local cultural expressions.	✓ **Tourism employment is highly seasonal** and dominated by short-term contracts. ✓ **The agri-food sector is fragile**, heavily reliant on imports, and vulnerable to climate stressors.
OPPORTUNITIES	**THREATS**
✓ **Ongoing and planned UNESCO nominations offer international visibility** and funding potential. ✓ **The official recognition and standardisation of Cabo Verdean Creole represent a strategic opportunity to strengthen national identity**, promote cultural inclusion, and foster intergenerational transmission of intangible heritage. ✓ **There is strong potential to expand eco-tourism and cultural tourism** on lesser-visited islands. ✓ **Development of hiking routes** and protection of natural parks **can enhance sustainable tourism** offerings. ✓ **Local gastronomy and food products are gaining visibility through**	✓ **Climate change and desertification threaten biodiversity, tourism, and agriculture.** ✓ **Unregulated mass tourism risks damaging heritage sites and fragile ecosystems.** ✓ **Many protected areas lack integrated management and monitoring systems.** ✓ **Cultural and biological diversity is at risk** due to weak intergenerational transmission. ✓ **Coastal urbanisation** and real estate speculation **endanger heritage and natural zones**. ✓ **Dependence on food imports and external markets creates vulnerability** to global shocks.

events and product certification schemes. ✓ **New legal frameworks promote touristic signage** and sustainable territorial use. ✓ **Digital initiatives are making cultural and natural heritage more accessible** and better documented. ✓ **Strengthening higher education in tourism, heritage, and blue economy can build national expertise**. ✓ **There is increasing access to international funding** sources and partnerships. ✓ **Regional cooperation in underwater archaeology and marine biodiversity is expanding**.	✓ **Youth emigration weakens national technical capacity** and innovation in key sectors. ✓ **Persistent social inequalities may limit the equitable benefits** of tourism and culture. ✓ **Marine ecosystems face overexploitation**, posing threats to sustainable blue economy ambitions.

At this stage, key issues central to the sustainable development of the analysed territories have been identified. These include:

- ✓ **Fragile infrastructure and public services**
  In both territories, infrastructure limitations affect access to essential services and hinder economic diversification. However, these challenges are significantly more acute in São Tomé e Príncipe, where deteriorated roads, limited healthcare and transport systems, and restricted digital connectivity severely constrain mobility, tourism development, and local livelihoods. In Cabo Verde, although improvements have been made, particularly in urban centres and the tourism sector, disparities persist between islands and rural areas.

- ✓ **Underutilised and at-risk cultural heritage**
  Both countries possess rich cultural and historical assets, yet face challenges in documentation, preservation, and promotion. In São Tomé e Príncipe, these challenges are more severe due to the poor condition of built heritage, limited museum infrastructure, and institutional capacity gaps. While Cabo Verde has made notable progress in cultural policy and international cooperation, underfunding and limited human resources continue to impact the full valorisation of its cultural sector.

- ✓ **External dependency and economic vulnerability**
  Both countries have fragile economies that are highly dependent on external aid, food imports, and informal sectors. This limits economic resilience and the ability to ensure sustainable livelihoods for local populations.

- ✓ **Uneven development of sustainable tourism**
  While Cabo Verde has a more consolidated tourism sector that plays a significant role in its national economy, São Tomé e Príncipe still presents untapped potential in ecotourism, cultural tourism, and blue tourism. However, structural and logistical constraints continue to limit its expansion and implementation.

- ✓ **Environmental challenges and biodiversity conservation**
  Forests, endemic species, coastal zones, and marine ecosystems are under threat from unregulated tourism, intensive agriculture, and climate change. Integrated conservation strategies are required to balance environmental protection with local development.

- ✓ **Shortage of qualified human resources and undervaluing of local education**
  The lack of specialised professionals in areas such as heritage management, museology, tourism, and sustainable agriculture is a significant obstacle. While relevant training programmes exist in both

Cabo Verde and São Tomé e Príncipe, there is a notable trend of students and young professionals emigrating to Europe—especially to Portuguese universities—resulting in low enrolment in local courses. The challenge lies not in educational provision alone, but in retaining local talent. Investing in training, capacity-building, and professional retention is essential for ensuring long-term, sustainable development.

Despite its limited timeframe and scope for intervention, the CULTIVAR project holds strong potential to contribute meaningfully to addressing the key challenges identified in this diagnosis. By fostering interdisciplinary, culturally grounded initiatives that connect the four core sectors — cultural and natural heritage, tourism, and local food products — the project aims to create synergies that support sustainable territorial development. Emphasis will be placed on the training of university lecturers, postgraduate students, and professionals from partner institutions and stakeholder organisations. Through this focus on capacity-building, CULTIVAR seeks not only to strengthen cooperation between higher education institutions and local actors, but also to support the advancement of specialised research and training within the HEIs of the partner countries. In doing so, the project contributes to building a stronger foundation for long-term knowledge generation and inclusive development in both Cabo Verde and São Tomé e Príncipe.

5. References

Aguiar, I. T. (2002). São Tomé e Príncipe: Plantas e povos – Origens e consequências. In *As ciências sociais nos espaços de língua portuguesa: Balanços e desafios* (Vol. 2, pp. 357–374). Universidade do Porto. https://ler.letras.up.pt/uploads/ficheiros/7127.pdf

Alarcão, N., Brito, B. R., and Marques, J. (2009). Turismo, culturas tradicionais e identidades em São Tomé e Príncipe. In B.R. Brito, (Coord.), *Desenvolvimento Comunitário: das Teorias às Práticas, Turismo, Ambiente e Práticas Educativas em São Tomé e Príncipe*. http://hdl.handle.net/10071/9784

Alexandre, N. and Swolkien, D. (2024). 18 Cabo Verde. In *Manual of Romance Languages in Africa*, edited by U. Reutner, 413-446. Berlin, Germany: De Gruyter.

Arias, D., Horton, J., and Valdivia, P. (2019). *Country economic memorandum for São Tomé and Príncipe - Background note 10: What are the obstacles to agricultural development in STP? A review of current agriculture production structure and potential*. World Bank. http://hdl.handle.net/10986/32092

ANMCV - Associação Nacional dos Municípios de Cabo Verde. (2021). *1º Relatório Local Voluntário (RLV) 2021*. https://hlpf.un.org/countries/cabo-verde/voluntary-national-review-2021

Batalha, L., and Carling, J. (Eds.). (2008). *Transnational Archipelago: Perspectives on Cape Verdean Migration and Diaspora*. Amsterdam University Press.

Bento, M., Niza, H., Cartaxana, A., Bandeira, S., De Paula, J., and Correia, A. (2023). A Dataset of Marine Macroinvertebrate Diversity from Mozambique and São Tomé and Príncipe. *Data*, 8, 76. https://doi.org/10.3390/data8050076

Berthet, M. A. (2012). Reflexões sobre as roças em São Tomé e Príncipe. *Estudos Históricos*, 25(50), 331-351.

Bettencourt, J., Dias, A., Lima, C., Chouzenoux, C., Fonseca, C., Pereira, D., Lopes, G., Coelho, I., Monteiro, J., Lima, J., Alves, M. E., Carvalho, P., and Silva, T. (2020). Arqueologia marítima em Cabo Verde: Enquadramento e primeiros resultados do projecto CONCHA. In J. Morais Arnaud, C. Neves, and A. Martins

(Eds.), *Arqueologia em Portugal: 2020 – Estado da Questão* (pp. 2071–2078). Lisboa: Associação dos Arqueólogos Portugueses and CITCEM. https://doi.org/10.21747/978-989-8970-25-1/arqa155

Brilhante, M; Varela, E.P; Essoh, A; Fortes, A; Duarte, M.C; Monteiro, F; Ferreira, V; Correia, A.M; Duarte, M,P; Romeiras, M.M. (2021). Tackling Food Insecurity in Cabo Verde Islands: The Nutritional, Agricultural and Environmental Values of the Legume Species. *Foods*, vol. 10(2):206. http://hdl.handle.net/10400.5/21367

Brito, B. R. (2020). Tourism and nature in São Tomé and Príncipe: Opportunities for the internationalisation of a Small Island State. In J. Saarinen, G. Wishitemi, and H. Manwa (Eds.), *Routledge Handbook of Tourism in Africa* (1st ed.). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781351022545

Cabral, D., Cunha, L., and De Almeida, M. (2019). Food choice and food consumption frequency of Cape Verde inhabitants. *Appetite*, 139, 26-34. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.appet.2019.04.005

Canalejo, A., López-Guzmán, T., Soto, M., and López, J. (2012). Tourism and socioeconomic development in Cape Verde. *Tourism & Management Studies*, 863-871.

Canalejo, A., and Sanchez-Cañizares, S. (2017). Desarrollo turístico en cabo verde en base al turismo comunitario: actitudes de los residentes. *Estudios y Perspectivas en Turismo*, vol. 26, núm. 3, 2017, pp. 644-661. https://www.redalyc.org/pdf/1807/180752116008.pdf

Cardoso, H; Hagemeijer, T; Alexandre, N. (2015). Crioulos de Base Lexical Portuguesa. M. Iliescu and E. Roegiest (eds.). *Anthologies, textes, attestations et sources des langues romanes*, 670-692, Berlin/Dordrecht: Mouton de Gruyter.

Carvalho, M., Lopes, A., Bento, A., Santos, L., Guedes, R. N. C., and Casquero. (2021). Can coffee variety affect the population dynamics of coffee berry borer (Hypothenemus hampei) on Sao Tome Island. *International Journal of Advanced Research*, 9(02), 592–603.

Carvalho, M., Lopes, A., Bento, A., Santos, L., Guedes, R. N. C., and Casquero, P. A. (2023). Effectiveness of different traps and lures for coffee berry borer,

Hypothenemus hampei (Ferrari, 1867) in São Tomé Island. *African Entomology*, 31(1), 6–11. https://doi.org/10.17159/2254-8854/2023/a13590

CECAFEB (2020) - Cooperativa de Exportação de Café Biológico, Relatório anual do ano 2019. (Unpublished internal report).

Centeio, N. (2023). *Plano de gestão da biodiversidade do subprojecto de reabilitação de trilhas em Santo Antão*. Unidade de Gestão de Projetos Especiais – UGPE. https://backend-ugpe.gov.cv/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Plano-de-Gestao-da-Biodiversidade_trilhas-SA-TRDEA.pdf

Central Intelligence Agency. (2023). *The World Factbook: São Tomé and Príncipe (2023 archive)*. https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/about/archives/2023/countries/sao-tome-and-principe/

Ceríaco, L., Marques, M., De Sousa, A., Veríssimo, J., Beja, P., and Ferreira, S. (2023). Illustrated keys and a DNA barcode reference library of the amphibians and terrestrial reptiles (Amphibia, Reptilia) of São Tomé and Príncipe (Gulf of Guinea, West Africa). *ZooKeys*, 1168, 41 - 75. https://doi.org/10.3897/zookeys.1168.101334

Chou, S., Lyra, A., Gomes, J., Rodriguez, D., Martins, M., Resende, N., Tavares, P., Dereczynski, C., Pilotto, I., Martins, A., De Carvalho, L., Onofre, J., Major, I., Penhor, M., and Santana, A. (2020). Downscaling projections of climate change in Sao Tome and Principe Islands, Africa. *Climate Dynamics*, 54, 4021-4042. https://doi.org/10.1007/s00382-020-05212-7

Correia e Silva, A.L. (2005). *Nos tempos do Porto Grande do Mindelo*. Praia – Mindelo: Centro Cultural Português / Instituto Camões, 2. ed., 203 p.

Deffontaines, J. (2019). *Biodiversity and ecosystems in São Tomé and Príncipe: A short review*. BirdLife International. https://biodiversidade-chm.st/phocadownload/Recursos/Reposito%CC%81rio%20Cientifico/Estudos/BirdLife%20International.%20(2019).%20Biodiversity%20and%20Ecosystems%20in%20Sa%CC%83o%20Tome%CC%81%20and%20Pri%CC%81ncipe.%20A%20short%20review..pdf

De Santiago, I., Nicolau, L., Marinho, R., and Pereira-Miguel, J. (2020). Prevention Harmful Consumption of Alcohol and Drugs in Sao Tome and

Principe Through Public Health Communication: The Scientific Protocol. *Acta Medica Portuguesa*, 33 4, 229-236 . https://doi.org/10.20344/amp.13435

Duarte, M., Gomes, I., Catarino, S., Brilhante, M., Gomes, S., Rendall, A., Moreno, Â., Fortes, A., Ferreira, V., Baptista, I., Dinis, H., and Romeiras, M. (2022). Diversity of Useful Plants in Cabo Verde Islands: A Biogeographic and Conservation Perspective. *Plants*, 11. https://doi.org/10.3390/plants11101313

Ecofin Agency. (2024, July 3). *Cape Verde among upper middle-income countries (World Bank classification).* https://www.ecofinagency.com/news/0307-47544-cape-verde-among-upper-middle-income-countries-world-bank

Faisandier, M. (2019). *Diagnostic Agraire du bassin d'approvisionnement de la CECAFEB à São Tomé, La place et le rôle du café Arabica et du café Robusta dans les systèmes de production de la zone septentrionale de l'île*. Mémoire d'Ingénieur Agronome, spécialité Ressources Système Agraire et Développement, AgroParisTech, 154p.

FAO - Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. (2019). *Fao's Work With Small Island Developing States: Transforming food systems, sustaining small islands*. https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/137c207f-180c-4858-be24-f1d128aefc4d/content

Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis. (2024). *Cabo Verde – Personal remittances, received (% of GDP)* [World Bank data]. https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/DDOI11CVA156NWDB

Fernandes, A. S., Sá, M. F., and Póvoas, R. F. (2011). Património Luso-Afro-Tropical: O exemplo das roças de São Tomé e Príncipe. Desafios para a sua conservação e reabilitação, e o seu potencial para o desenvolvimento, *CLME'2011, 6º Congresso Luso-Moçambicano de Engenharia*, Maputo.

Fernandes, G.A.M. (2006). *Em busca da nação: notas para uma reinterpretação do Cabo Verde crioulo.* Florianópolis/Praia: Editora da UFSC/IBNL, 2006.

Ferreira-Airaud, B., Schmitt, V., Vieira, S., Rio, M.J.d.C.d., Neto, E., Pereira, J. (2022). The Sea Turtles of São Tomé and Príncipe: Diversity, Distribution, and Conservation Status. In: Ceríaco, L.M.P., de Lima, R.F., Melo, M., Bell, R.C. (eds)

Biodiversity of the Gulf of Guinea Oceanic Islands. Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-06153-0_20

Ferreira, V.; Furtado, C.; Tolentino, A.C.; Fortes, A. and Graça, A. (2017). *Cape Verde - a nation born in the XV century: trajectories and trends of a migrated people.*

Garcia, Ana Catarina; Bettencourt, José Antonio; Bava de Camargo, Paulo Fernando; Monteiro, Jaylson; De Oliveira Torres, Rodrigo (2024). A gestão do Patrimônio Cultural Subaquático no Atlântico Afro-ibero-americano: Uma perspetiva comparada entre Brasil, Cabo Verde, Portugal e Uruguai. *Revista de Arqueologia*, [S. l.], v. 37, n. 3, p. 221–243, 2024. DOI: 10.24885/sab.v37i3.1162. https://revista.sabnet.org/ojs/index.php/sab/article/view/1162

Gomes, L., and Évora, J. (Eds.). (2023). *Formas de resistência nas colónias portuguesas, 1600–1850: Subsídios para o estudo da crioulização no mundo atlântico.* Cidade da Praia: Edições Uni-CV.

Gomes, M.O; Graça, R.A.C; Ascenção, M.V. e Chissingui, D. (2024). Pesca sustentável em São Tomé e Príncipe: uma miragem ou uma realidade? Uma análise sobre a pesca em São Tomé nas últimas décadas. (2024). *Revista Internacional Em Língua Portuguesa*, 45, 119-133. https://doi.org/10.31492/2184-2043.RILP2024.45/pp.119-133

González, J. A., Monteiro, C. A., Correia, S., Lopes, E., Almeida, N., Martins, A., Gaztañaga, I., González-Lorenzo, G., Arenas-Ruiz, R., Tejera, G., and Lorenzo, J. M. (2020). Current and emerging small-scale fisheries and target species in Cabo Verde, with recommendations for pilot actions favouring sustainable development. *Cybium*, 44(4): 355-371. https://doi.org/10.26028/CYBIUM/2020-444-006

Haroun, R., Herrero Barrencua, A., Abreu, A.D. (2018). Mangrove Habitats in São Tomé and Príncipe (Gulf of Guinea, Africa): Conservation and Management Status. In: Makowski, C., Finkl, C. (eds) *Threats to Mangrove Forests*. Coastal Research Library, vol 25. Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-73016-5_27

Heckman, J.(1985). Culture and the environment on the Cape Verde Islands. *Environmental Management* 9, 141–149. https://doi.org/10.1007/BF01867114

Henriques, I. C., and Carvalho, I. (2019). *São Tomé e Príncipe – O espaço e a história: Catálogo da exposição*. Lisboa: Fundação ROÇAMUNDO.

IMF. (2024). *São Tomé and Príncipe: Country page*. International Monetary Fund. https://www.imf.org/en/Countries/STP

IMF. (2025). *Cabo Verde: IMF DataMapper country profile*. International Monetary Fund. https://www.imf.org/external/datamapper/profile/CPV

INE. (2025a). *Estatísticas do Turismo Movimentação de Hóspedes, Ano 2024*. Instituto Nacional de Estatística - Cabo Verde. https://ine.cv/publicacoes/estatisticas-do-turismo-movimentacao-de-hospedes-ano-2024/

INE. (2025b). *Estatísticas do Turismo, Inventário Anual de Estabelecimentos Hoteleiros 2024*. Instituto Nacional de Estatística - Cabo Verde. https://ine.cv/publicacoes/estatisticas-do-turismo-inventario-anual-de-estabelecimentos-hoteleiros-2024/

INE. (2025c). *Estatísticas do turismo – Movimentação de hóspedes: 1º trimestre 2025.* Instituto Nacional de Estatística - Cabo Verde. https://ine.cv/publicacoes/estatisticas-do-turismo-movimentacao-de-hospedes-1o-trimestre-2025/

Janeirinho, L., and Mestre, M. (2021). *Rotas e Alquimia: o "queijo di terra" da Ilha do Maio*. https://www.imvf.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/rotas-e-alquimia-turismo-maio.pdf

Jurisic David, G., and David, A. (2020). *Manual do Queijo*. https://cerai.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/CV_Manual-do-Queijo.pdf

Kaufmann, M.P. and Kubo, R.R. (2018). Os hábitos alimentares das populações rurais de Cabo Verde e sua relação com as culturas de sequeiro. *Cadernos de Agroecologia*, 13 (1). https://cadernos.aba-agroecologia.org.br/cadernos/article/view/594

Keese, A. (2011). Early Limits of Local Decolonization in São Tomé and Príncipe: From Colonial Abuses to Postcolonial Disappointment, 1945–1976. *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 44, 373-392. https://doi.org/10.18452/13581

Laurent R, Szpiech Z.A, da Costa S.S, Thouzeau V, Fortes-Lima C.A, Dessarps-Freichey F, Lémée L, Utgé J, Rosenberg N.A, Baptista M, Verdu P. (2023). A genetic and linguistic analysis of the admixture histories of the islands of Cabo Verde. *Elife*, 12:e79827. https://doi.org/10.7554/eLife.79827

Lindskog, P., and Delaite, B. (1996). Degrading Land: An Environmental History Perspective of the Cape Verde Islands. *Environment and History*, 2, 271-290. https://doi.org/10.3197/096734096779522266

Lopes, A. (2018). Portraying a speech community. In Laura Álvarez/Perpétua Gonçalves/Juanito Avelar (eds.), *The Portuguese Language Continuum in Africa and Brazil*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia, Benjamins, 135–167.

Lopes, A.R.M. (2023). *O turismo de voluntariado em São Tomé e Príncipe* [Dissertação de Mestrado, Universidade de Coimbra]. Repositório da Universidade de Coimbra. https://hdl.handle.net/10316/111736

Lopes, A., and Delgado, R. (2019). *O perfil dos turistas que visitam a ilha de Santo Antão. Projeto "+ Turismo + Desenvolvimento Sustentável*". Instituto Superior de Ciências Económicas e Empresariais (ISCEE).

Lopes, A., Rodrigues, S., and Dias, M. (2024). *Estudo de perfil dos excursionistas (cruzeiristas)*. Observatório de Turismo do ISCEE.

Lopes, E., Rodrigues, J., Monteiro, A., Soares, J., Spencer, I., Da Luz Lima, M., and Ribeiro, A. (2022). Salt profile and content in foods prepared in restaurants and bakeries: Analysis of the 2 main urban centers in Cape Verde. *Global Journal of Medical Research*. https://doi.org/10.21203/rs.3.rs-1243524/v1

Lopez-Guzmán, T., Borges, O. and Castillo-Canalejo, A. M. (2011). Community-based tourism in Cape Verde – a case study. *Tourism and Hospitality Management,* 17(1), 35–44. https://doi.org/10.20867/thm.17.1.3

Lorenzato, G. (2024). *Feasibility Study: Debt Swap for Nature and Climate in São Tomé and Príncipe*. UNDP - United Nations Development Programme.

Madureira, M. D. C. D. (2012). Plantas medicinais e medicina tradicional de S. Tomé e Príncipe. *Actas do Colóquio Internacional São Tomé e Príncipe numa perspectiva interdisciplinar, diacrónica e sincrónica*, 433-453. http://hdl.handle.net/10071/3917

MAHOT – Ministério da Agricultura e Ambiente. (2023). *Livro Branco sobre o Estado do Ambiente em Cabo Verde. Praia: Governo de Cabo Verde*. https://portaldoclima.gov.cv/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Livro-Branco-Estado-Ambiente.pdf

Manglis, A., Fourkiotou, A., and Papadopoulou, D. (2021). *A Roadmap for the Sustainable Valorization of Accessible Underwater Cultural Heritage Sites. Heritage*. https://doi.org/10.3390/heritage4040259

Matos, A. (2021). Poverty alleviation, ecotourism, and biodiversity protection in Príncipe Island. In M. Camilleri (Ed.), *Handbook of research on the role of tourism in achieving sustainable development goals*, pp. 64–80. IGI Global.

Mcculloch, B., Rowson, J., Da Mour, A., Rocha, H., Simões, M., and Antunes, A. (2019). Metabolic profiling and environmental characterisation of salterns in the islands of Cabo Verde. Access Microbiology. https://doi.org/10.1099/ACMI.AC2019.PO0517

Mendes, S., Martins, J., and Mouga, T. (2019). Ecotourism based on the observation of sea turtles – A sustainable solution for the touristic promotion of São Tomé and Príncipe. *Cogent Social Sciences*, 5. https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2019.1696001

Migration Data Portal. (2024). *Remittances overview: Cabo Verde*. https://www.migrationdataportal.org/themes/remittances-overview

Monteiro, F., Fortes, A., Ferreira, V., Pereira Essoh, A., Gomes, I., Correia, A. M., and Romeiras, M. M. (2020). Current Status and Trends in Cabo Verde Agriculture. *Agronomy*, 10(1), 74. https://doi.org/10.3390/agronomy10010074

Monteiro, J.L.M. (2023). *Turismo e desenvolvimento sustentáveis: Cabo Verde-pós-colonial* [Tese de Doutoramento. Universidade de Lisboa]. Instituto Superior de Economia e Gestão. http://hdl.handle.net/10400.5/27969

Morales, E., and Quintana, L. (2019). Turismo en Cabo Verde: de la dicotomia a la integracion. *PASOS - Revista de Turismo y Patrimonio Cultural*, 17, 489-507. https://doi.org/10.25145/J.PASOS.2019.17.035

Mota, N.Q.C.D. (2021). *Marketing territorial como instrumento para o desenvolvimento sustentável do turismo em São Tomé*. [Tese de Mestrado em

Economia e Gestão Aplicadas]. Universidade de Évora. http://hdl.handle.net/10174/32176

Narciso, A., Barzini, S., and Nuzzo, A. (2020). Discovering Neverland: São Tomé e Príncipe and the development of the agricultural heritage of a multi-ethnic population. *Journal of Agriculture and Environment for International Development* (JAEID), 114(2), 114, 63-84. https://doi.org/10.12895/JAEID.20202.1376

Narciso, A., and Tavares, H. (2022). *The volcanic effects of PDO wines in Cabo Verde: A sustainable approach.* Paper presented at the International Conference on Geographical Indications and Sustainable Development.

Neto, K., Henriques, M.H. (2023). Geoheritage of the Príncipe UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve (West Africa): Selected Geosites. *Geoheritage* 15, 118. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12371-023-00887-w

Neto, K., Henriques, M.H. (2023). Geoheritage of the Príncipe UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve (West Africa): Selected Geosites. *Geoheritage* 15, 118. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12371-023-00887-w

Neves, V. (2022). *Segurança alimentar e nutricional em São Tomé e Príncipe: Propostas de revisão legislativa*. IMVF. https://www.imvf.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/seguranca-alimentar-e-nutricional-stp.pdf

Neves, J., Rocha, V., and Rocha, D. (2022). The Importance of Nature-Based Solutions to Enhance Cabo Verde's Environment. *Integrated Science*. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-91843-9_6

OECD. (2022). *Sustainable Ocean Economy Country Diagnostics of Cabo Verde*. Development Co-operation Directorate, OECD Publishing, Paris. https://doi.org/10.1787/e3cdc345-en

Okyere, J., Ayebeng, C., and Dickson, K. (2025). Alcohol consumption among persons living with hypertension: evidence from a population-based study in Cape Verde. *BMC Public Health*, 25. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-025-21663-1

Pape, D. (2016). As roças de São Tomé e Príncipe: Um património da Lusofonia. *Estudo Prévio: Revista do Centro de Estudos de Arquitectura, Cidade e Território da Universidade Autónoma de Lisboa*. http://hdl.handle.net/11144/2774

Porriños, G., Lopes Cravid, M., e Vilela López, B. (2023). *Recenseamento do setor da pesca artesanal e semi-industrial de São Tomé e Príncipe*. Roma, FAO. https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/cc8938pt

Prazeres, I., and Lucas, M. R. (2020). Repensar a cadeia de valor do cacau biológico de São Tomé e Príncipe. *Revista de Ciências Agrárias*, 43, 48-60.

Programa Tatô. (n.d.). Programa Tatô. https://www.programatato.org/

Ramalho, R. (2011). *The Cape Verde Archipelago. In: Building the Cape Verde Islands*. Springer Theses. Springer, Berlin, Heidelberg. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-642-19103-9_2

República Democrática de São Tomé e Príncipe. (2003). *Lei n.º 4/2003: Lei do Património Histórico-Cultural Nacional*. https://www.axl.cefan.ulaval.ca/afrique/Sao-Tome-Principe-loi-4-2003.htm

República Democrática de São Tomé e Príncipe. (2021a). *Plano de manejo do Parque Nacional Obô de São Tomé (2021-2025) – Compilado PM e Anexos*. Direcção-Geral do Ambiente. https://biodiversidade-chm.st/phocadownload/Biodiversidade/A%CC%81reas%20Protegidas/PNOST/PM%20PNOST%202021-2025_Compilado_PM.e.Anexos.pdf

República Democrática de São Tomé e Príncipe. (2021b). *Plano de manejo do Parque Natural do Príncipe (2022-2026) – versão 2.1.* Direcção-Geral do Ambiente. https://biodiversidade-chm.st/phocadownload/Biodiversidade/A%CC%81reas%20Protegidas/PNP/Plano%20de%20Manejo%20do%20Parque%20Natural%20do%20Principe%20PNP%202022-2026%202.1.pdf

Rocha, A.L. (2021). *Sustentabilidade da Economia Azul no sector de Turismo de São Tomé e Príncipe*. [Tese de Mestrado em Economia e Gestão Aplicadas]. Universidade de Évora. http://hdl.handle.net/10174/30751

Romeiras, M.M., Gomes, I., Catarino, S., Fortes, A., Ferreira, V., and Duarte, M.C. (eds.) (2023). *Flora and Natural Resources of Cabo Verde Islands – Book of Abstracts.* Universidade de Cabo Verde & Universidade de Lisboa. ISAPress, Lisboa. ISBN: 978-989-35095-2-4.

Romeiras, M.; Catarino, S.; Gomes, I.; Fernandes, C.; Costas, J.; Caujapé-Castells, J.; and Duarte, M.C. (2016). IUCN Red List assessment of the Cape

Verde endemic flora: towards a global strategy for plant conservation in Macaronesia. *Botanical Journal of the Linnean Society*, 180 (3), 413–425, https://doi.org/10.1111/boj.12370

Rosário, I. C. M. do (2017). *As políticas públicas para o turismo em Cabo Verde: da sustentabilidade ao desenvolvimento*. Dissertação de mestrado, Iscte - Instituto Universitário de Lisboa]. Repositório do Iscte. https://repositorio.iscte-iul.pt/handle/10071/22154

Russell, P., and Tennent, W. (2018). *A photographic record of the life history of Chilades evorae Libert, Baliteau & Baliteau, 2011 (Lepidoptera: Lycaenidae), endemic to the Cabo Verde Islands, with notes on ecology and distribution*. *Zoologia Caboverdiana*, 7(1), 12–18. https://scvz.org/zoolcv/vol7no1/ZoolCV2018_7_1_Russel%20&%20Tennet.pdf

Salvador, A., and Lucas, M. R. (2020). Estudo de mercado de café biológico de São Tomé e Príncipe. *Revista de Ciências Agrárias*, 2020, 43: 36-47.

Sanches, E. R. (2013). Institucionalização do Sistema Partidário e Democratização em Cabo Verde (1991-2011). In: Cristina M. S. E Suzano C. Org., *Entre África e a Europa: Nação, Estado, e Democracia em Cabo Verde*. Coimbra: Almedina.

Sant'Ana, H., and Serra, F. (2013). Práticas alimentares, economia e epidemias: uma visão sintética de Cabo Verde entre meados do século XIX e inícios do século XX. In Atas do Colóquio Internacional Cabo Verde e Guiné-Bissau: *Percursos do Saber e da Ciência*, pp. 1–20. Instituto de Investigação Científica Tropical. https://coloquiocvgb.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/p07c01-helena-santana.pdf

Santos, M.E.M. (Coord.). (2007). *História concisa de Cabo Verde*. Lisboa: Instituto de Investigação Científica Tropical.

Sarmento, E.M; Ferreira, C; Ferreira, C. and Correia da Fonseca, C. (2023). *Tourism master plan for the Island of Santiago, Cape Verde: 2020–2030 – Part 1.* Instituto Superior de Economia e Gestão - CEsA/CSG - Documentos de Trabalho nº 192/2023. http://hdl.handle.net/10400.5/27621

Sarmento, E.M; Ferreira, C; Ferreira, C. and Correia da Fonseca, C. (2023). *Tourism master plan for the Island of Santiago, Cape Verde : 2020–2030 – Part 2*. Instituto Superior de Economia e Gestão - CEsA/CSG - Documentos de Trabalho nº 193/2023. http://hdl.handle.net/10400.5/27622

Sarmento, E. M., and Monteiro, J. L. M. (2023). Tourism competitiveness in Cape Verde: the case of Tarrafal/Santiago. *Journal of Tourism and Development*, 42, 117-132. https://doi.org/10.34624/rtd.v42i0.29971

Seibert, G. (2014). Crioulização em Cabo Verde e São Tomé e Príncipe: divergências históricas e identitárias. *Afro-Ásia*, 49, 41-70. https://doi.org/10.1590/S0002-05912014000100002

Seibert, G. (2016). Património Edificado de São Tomé e Príncipe - A Roça Sundy. *China e Países Lusófonos - Património Construído*. Coleção Novos Caminhos n.º 3.

Semedo, M. and Melo, R. (2019). O potencial do turismo marítimo-desportivo em Cabo Verde: Um estudo de caso. Escola Superior de Educação de Coimbra. Exedra: *Revista Científica, Número Temático - Turismo* (2), 97–105. http://hdl.handle.net/10400.26/47759

Sena, N., Veiga, A., Semedo, A., Abu-Raya, M., Semedo, R., Fujii, I., and Makino, M. (2023). Co-Designing Protected Areas Management with Small Island Developing States' Local Stakeholders: A Case from Coastal Communities of Cabo Verde. *Sustainability*. https://doi.org/10.3390/su152015178

Swolkien, D. and Cobbinah, A. (2019). Cape Verdean Creole – Santo Antão: what we know so far. *JIRC - Journal of Ibero-Romance Creoles*, 9.1, 162-193.

Tavares, W., Andrade, S., and Da Silveira, B. (2024). Traditional Cheese Produced in Fogo Island - Cape Verde: Physico-Chemical, Sensory, Hygienic and Safety Characteristics. *International Journal of Research - GRANTHAALAYAH*. https://doi.org/10.29121/granthaalayah.v12.i2.2024.5497

Trading Economics. (2024). *Cape Verde GDP – 2023 estimate*. https://tradingeconomics.com/cape-verde/gdp

Tenreiro, Francisco (1961*). A ilha de São Tomé*. Lisboa, Junta de Investigações do Ultramar.

Unidade de Gestão de Projetos Especiais. (2022*). Projeto Turismo Resiliente e Desenvolvimento da Economia Azul: Plano de Engajamento das Partes Interessadas (PEPI)*. Governo de Cabo Verde. https://backend-ugpe.gov.cv/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/PEPI_Fnal_AF_Projecto-TRDEA.pdf

United Nations in Cabo Verde. (2024*). UN Country Team Annual Results Report. Cabo Verde 2024.* https://caboverde.un.org/pt/294233-onu-cabo-verde-relat%C3%B3rio-anual-2024

United Nations Capital Development Fund and World Bank. (2025, April). *Policy diagnostic: São Tomé and Príncipe – Migration and remittances*. https://migrantmoney.uncdf.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/Policy-Diagnostic-Sao-Tome-April2025.pdf

UNDP - United Nations Development Programme. (2024). *Human Development Reports: São Tomé and Príncipe*. https://hdr.undp.org/data-center/specific-country-data#/countries/STP

UNDP - United Nations Development Programme. (2025). *Human Development Report – HDI trends for Cabo Verde*. https://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/2025_HDR/HDR25_Statistical_Annex_HDI_Trends_Table.pdf

United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. (2022). *Monitoring and reporting on the progress towards the development effectiveness of countries graduating from the least developed country category* (CDP Policy Brief No. 8). https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/wp-content/uploads/sites/45/CDP-PL-2022-8-6-Monitoring.pdf

United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. (2022). *Voluntary National Review: São Tomé and Príncipe (UN HLPF).* https://hlpf.un.org/countries/sao-tome-and-principe/voluntary-national-review-2022

UNESCO. (2019). *Morna, musical practice of Cabo Verde [Intangible cultural heritage].* UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/morna-musical-practice-of-cabo-verde-01469

UNESCO World Heritage Centre. (2009). Cidade Velha, Historic Centre of Ribeira Grande. In *World Heritage List*. Retrieved July 22, 2025, from https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1310/

UNESCO World Heritage Centre. (2019). Cidade Velha – Plano de Gestão 2019–2022 [Plano de gestão]. In *Management Plans: Cidade Velha, Historic Centre of Ribeira Grande (Cabo Verde).* UNESCO. https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1310/documents/

UNESCO World Heritage Centre. (2024). *The operational guidelines for the implementation of the World Heritage Convention*. https://whc.unesco.org/en/guidelines

Viegas, S.Q.O. (2025). *Promoção Turística e Desenvolvimento do Turismo Sustentável em São Tomé e Príncipe* [Tese de Mestrado em Economia e Gestão Aplicadas]. Universidade de Évora. http://hdl.handle.net/10174/38406

Vieira, A. F. C. S. (2015). *Qualidade e segurança de alimentos tradicionais em Cabo Verde* [Tese de doutoramento]. Instituto Superior de Agronomia, Universidade de Lisboa. http://hdl.handle.net/10400.5/9267

Wabnitz C.C.C., Harper S.J.M. et al. (2023). *Gender and Fisheries – The Republic of Cabo Verde. Country Fact Sheet.* Ocean Risk and Resilience Action Alliance (ORRAA). https://oceanrisk.earth/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Cabo_Verde_factsheet_fin-1.pdf

World Bank. (2019). *Disclosable version of the ISR: Competitiveness for Tourism Development (P146666) – Sequence No. 06 [Relatório].* World Bank Group. https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/196801561237996249/pdf/Disclosable-Version-of-the-ISR-Competitiveness-for-Tourism-Development-P146666-Sequence-No-06.pdf

World Bank. (2023). *Gender-responsive tourism in Cabo Verde: Ensuring better, safe, and more jobs for women*. Washington, D.C.: World Bank Group. https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/39709

World Bank. (2023). *Pesquisa do mercado de caminhadas e oportunidades em Cabo Verde.* Washington, D.C.: World Bank Group. http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/099719208282330478

World Bank. (2023). *Sailing Rough Seas: Accelerating Growth and Fostering Resilience to Climate Change in Cabo Verde – Country Economic Memorandum*. Washington, DC: World Bank. https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/40052

World Bank. (2023). *Cabo Verde poverty and equity assessment: Building resilient livelihoods in a challenging context*. https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/099101524172526567/pdf/P179196-c5262880-3bde-4642-8137-8551c0940a00.pdf

World Bank. (2024). *Charting a Blue Course: Investment Projects for the Blue Economy Transition in São Tomé e Príncipe*. World Bank. http://hdl.handle.net/10986/41183

World Bank. (2024). *São Tomé and Príncipe country overview*. https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/saotome/overview

World Bank. (2024, December). *Falling short: Rethinking migration in São Tomé and Príncipe* [Blog post]. https://blogs.worldbank.org/en/peoplemove/falling-short--rethinking-migration-in-sao-tome-and-principe

World Bank. (2024, March). *Cabo Verde economic update: Blue economy and sustainable growth*. https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/caboverde/publication/cabo-verde-economic-update-2024-blue-economy-navigating-towards-sustainable-growth-in-cabo-verde

World Bank. (2025, June 23). *Unlocking inclusive growth through increased resilience and equal opportunities in Cabo Verde* [Press release]. https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2025/06/23/cabo-verde-unlocking-inclusive-growth-through-increased-resilience-and-equal-opportunities

World Bank. (2025). *World Bank open data: São Tomé and Príncipe*. https://data.worldbank.org/country/sao-tome-and-principe

World Bank. (2025). *Youth unemployment rate for São Tomé and Príncipe (ages 15–24)*. https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.UEM.1524.ZS?locations=ST

World Bank and ATTA - Adventure Travel Trade Association. (2023). *Hiking Market Research and Opportunities in Cabo Verde*.

https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/099716108282331842/pdf/IDU0d3992f530d5d00499d0b1d40f0554734fa50.pdf

WorldData.info. (2024). *São Tomé and Príncipe: Economic indicators*. https://www.worlddata.info/africa/sao-tome-and-principe/index.php

World Economics. (2025). *Cabo Verde: Gini coefficient – Inequality data and analysis.* https://www.worldeconomics.com/Inequality/Gini-Coefficient/Cabo%20Verde.aspx

WTTC. (2024). *Travel & Tourism Economic Impact 2024: Cabo Verde*. World Travel & Tourism Council.

6. Appendices

A. Stakeholders Map

CULTIVAR Stakeholders Map				
HEIs and Academic stakeholders				
Country (CV or STP)	**Island**	**Intervention area** (Education/Culture/Tourism/Agriculture-Local food production/Others)	**Institution**	**Website (or Link)**
CV	Santiago & São Vicente	Education	University of Cape Verde (UniCV)	https://www.unicv.edu.cv/pt/
CV	Santiago & São Vicente	Education	Jean Piaget University (UniPiaget)	https://www.unipiaget.edu.cv/
CV	Santiago & São Vicente	Education	Higher Institute of Economic and Business Sciences (ISCEE)	https://www.iscee.edu.cv/
CV	Santiago	Education	Higher Institute of Legal and Social Sciences (ISCJS)	http://www.iscjs.edu.cv/index.php/pt/
CV	Santiago	Education	Lusofona University	https://www.ulusofona.edu.cv/ensino-lusofona
CV	Santiago	Education	University of Santiago	https://us.edu.cv/contact.html
CV	Santiago	Education	University of Mindelo	https://um.edu.cv/
CV	Santiago	Education	Cape Verde School of Hospitality and Tourism (EHT)	https://www.facebook.com/EHTCV
STP	São Tomé	Education	University of São Tomé e Príncipe (USTP)	https://www.ustp-edu-st.com/
STP	São Tomé	Education	EHT - Escola de Turismo e Hotelaria - STP	https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100092031282422
STP	São Tomé	Education	Liceu Nacional de São Tomé e Príncipe	https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100079561885052
Museums and Memory Institutions				
Country	**Island**	**Intervention area**	**Institution**	**Website**
CV	Santiago	Culture	Archaeological Museum (Praia)	https://www.museus.cv/museum_details/?mcv=Museu%20de%20Arqueologia&museum=36
CV	Santiago	Culture	Ethnographic Museum (Praia)	https://www.museus.cv/museum_details/?mcv=Museu%20Etnogr%C3%A1fico%20da%20Praia&museum=42
CV	Santiago	Culture	Sema Lopi Cultural Centre (Santa Cruz)	https://www.facebook.com/GovernodeCaboVerde/posts/o-centro-cultural-sema-lopi-e-o-centro-interpretativo-sema-lopi-ser%C3%A3o-a-partir-d/728109682680755/
CV	Santiago	Culture	National Historical Archive (Praia)	arquivonacional.cv
CV	Santiago	Culture	National Library (Praia)	https://bn.cv/
CV	Santiago	Culture	Tabanca Museum (Assomada)	https://www.museus.cv/museum_details/?mcv=Museu%20da%20Tabanca&museum=34
CV	Santiago	Culture	Norberto Tavares Museum (Assomada)	https://www.museus.cv/museum_details/?mcv=Museu%20Norberto%20Tavares&museum=47
CV	Santiago	Culture	Tarrafal Concentration Camp Museum	https://museus.cv/museum_details/?mcv=Museu%20do%20Campo%20de%20Concentra%C3%A7%C3%A3o%20do%20Tarrafal&museum=39
CV	Santiago	Culture	Ildo Lobo Palace (Praia)	https://www.facebook.com/palaciodaculturaildolobo/
CV	Santiago	Culture	Bank Museum (Praia)	https://www.bcv.cv/pt/O%20Banco/Museu%20Banco%20de%20Cabo%20Verde/Paginas/Museu-Banco-de-Cabo-Verde-.aspx
CV	Santiago	Culture	Cultural Center of Cidade Velha	https://www.facebook.com/p/Centro-Cultural-Cidade-Velha-100064603635762/
CV	Santiago	Culture	Amílcar Cabral Foundation (Praia)	https://amilcarcabral.cv/museu/

CV	São Vicente	Culture	The Sea Museum (Mindelo)	https://www.museus.cv/museum_details/?mcv=Museu%20do%20Mar&museum=43
CV	São Vicente	Culture	Cesária Évora Museum Centre (Mindelo)	https://www.museus.cv/museum_details/?mcv=N%C3%BAcleo%20Museol%C3%B3gico%20Ces%C3%A1ria%20%C3%89vora&museum=37
CV	São Vicente	Culture	Cesária Évora Museum (Mindelo)	https://www.facebook.com/cesariaevoracv/?locale=pt_BR
CV	São Vicente	Culture	CNAD - National Centre for Art, Crafts and Design (Mindelo)	https://cnad.cv/sobre/
CV	São Vicente	Culture	Centro Cultural do Mindelo	https://www.facebook.com/CCMindelo/?locale=pt_PT
CV	São Nicolau	Culture	Fishing Museum (Tarrafal)	https://www.governo.cv/museu-da-pesca-tem-valiosos-acervos-sobre-a-pesca-da-baleia-antigos-equipamentos-de-pesca-e-conservas-de-atum/
CV	São Nicolau	Cultura	Casa da Morna Sodade (Tarrafal)	https://www.museus.cv/museum_details/?mcv=Casa%20da%20Morna%20Sodade&museum=46
CV	Fogo	Culture	House of Memory (São Filipe)	
CV	Fogo	Culture	São Filipe Municipal Museum (São Filipe)	
CV	Boa Vista	Culture	Archaeology Museum (Boa Vista)	https://www.museus.cv/museum_details/?mcv=Museu%20de%20Arqueologia%20da%20Boa%20Vista&museum=52
CV	Brava	Culture	Eugênio Tavares House Museum (Nova Sintra)	https://www.museus.cv/museum_details/?mcv=Casa%20Museu%20Eug%C3%A9nio%20Tavares&museum=45
STP	São Tomé	Culture	Museu Nacional de São Tomé e Príncipe	https://www.facebook.com/museunacionalstp
STP	São Tomé	Culture	Museu do Mar e da Pesca Artesanal	https://museumarpescastp.wordpress.com/
STP	São Tomé	Culture	Museu do Café	https://www.facebook.com/museudocafemc/about_contact_and_basic_info?locale=pt_PT
STP	São Tomé	Culture	Casa Museu Almada Negreiros	https://www.facebook.com/casamuseualmadanegreiros/?locale=pt_PT
STP	São Tomé	Culture	Arquivo Histórico de São Tomé e Príncipe	https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100070118298284#
STP	São Tomé	Culture	Cultura Botânica	https://www.facebook.com/CulturaBotanicaSTP/
STP	São Tomé	Culture	Casa da Cultura	https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100064856080797#
STP	São Tomé	Education/Culture	Biblioteca Nacional Francisco José Tenreiro / Biblioteca Nacional de São Tomé e Príncipe	https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100064228534396#
STP	São Tomé	Others	Jardim Botânico do Bom Sucesso	

Public bodies and institutes (National Institutes, Ministries, State Secretariats)				
Country	**Island**	**Intervention area**	**Institution**	**Website**
CV	-	Culture	Ministry of Culture and Creative Industries	https://www.facebook.com/cultura.caboverde/?locale=pt_PT
CV	-	Education	Erasmus+ National Focal Point | Directorate-General for Higher Education	
CV	São Vicente	Culture	Directorate General of Arts and Creative Industries (Mindelo)	https://www.facebook.com/cultura.caboverde/?locale=pt_PT
CV	Santiago	Culture	Brazil Cultural Centre (Praia)	https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61560118127340
CV	Santiago	Culture/others	Institute of Cultural Heritage (IPC) Praia	https://ipc.cv/
CV	Santiago	Education / Culture	Camões Institute / Portuguese Cultural Centre (Praia)	https://www.facebook.com/CCPCaboVerde/
STP	São Tomé	Culture & Education	Ministry of Education, Culture, Science and Higher Educ	https://www.facebook.com/educacao.stp/?locale=pt_PT
STP	São Tomé	Culture & Education	General Directorate of Culture of São Tomé and Príncipe	https://dgculturastp.wixsite.com/meusite
STP	-	Education	Erasmus+ National Focal Point	

STP	São Tomé	Education / Culture	Camões – Centro Cultural Português em São Tomé	https://www.instituto-camoes.pt/activity/o-que-fazemos/investigacao/centros-culturais/sao-tome-e-principe
STP	São Tomé	Education / Culture	Camões – Centro Cultural Português - Polo no Príncipe	https://www.instituto-camoes.pt/activity/o-que-fazemos/investigacao/centros-culturais/sao-tome-e-principe
Foundations, NGOs, Associations				
Country	**Island**	**Intervention area**	**Institution**	**Website**
PT		Culture and Others	ADPM - Associação de Defesa do Património de Mértola	https://adpm.pt/
CV	Boa Vista	Others	Cabo Verde Natura 2000	https://caboverdenatura2000.org/pt-pt/
CV	Boa Vista	Others	ONG Help For Boa Vista	https://www.help-for-boavista.com/
CV	Sal	Others	Associação Projeto Biodiversidade	https://www.projectbiodiversity.org/pt
CV	Santiago	Others	VidaEdu - Voluntariado Internacional	https://www.vidaedu.com/voluntariado-internacional/voluntariado-em-cabo-verde/
CV	-	Others	Food And Agriculture Organization Of The United Nations (FAO) - Cabo Verde	https://www.fao.org/countryprofiles/index/en/?iso3=CPV
PT/STP	ST	Culture and Others	IMVF - Instituto Marquês de Valle Flôr	https://www.imvf.org/
STP	São Tomé	Culture and Arts	CACAU - Casa das Artes Crição Ambiente e Utopias	https://www.facebook.com/cacau.cultural/?locale=pt_PT
STP	São Tomé	Others	Associação Pica Pau	
STP	São Tomé	Others	ONG Fundação Marapa	https://marapastp.org/index.html
STP	São Tomé	Agriculture-Local food production	Quá Téla	https://www.facebook.com/quatela.produtosSTP?locale=pt_PT
STP	São Tomé	Culture and Others	Manga-Manga	https://manga-manga.com/
STP	Príncipe	Others	ONG Fundação Príncipe	https://fundacaoprincipe.org/pt/homepage/
STP	Príncipe	Others	Cooperativa de Valorização de Resíduos	https://www.facebook.com/CVRPrincipe/?locale=pt_PT / https://fundacaoprincipe.org/pt/projetos/engamento-comunidade/cooperativa-valorizacao-residuos
STP	Príncipe	Others	Associação das Mulheres Artesãs da Ilha do Príncipe - Facilita Fora Umuen	https://www.facebook.com/FFUprincipe/
Private companies & Cooperatives				
Country	**Island**	**Intervention area**	**Institution**	**Website**
CV	Sal	Culture	Salt Museum (Santa Maria)	https://www.facebook.com/museudosal.caboverde/
CV	Sal	Culture	Djunta Mo Art (Santa Maria)	https://www.facebook.com/djuntamoart/
CV	Santo Antão	Agriculture-Local food prodution	ECOFARM CABO VERDE (Production and trade of agricultural products) (Ribeira Grande)	https://ecofarm.cv/sobrenos/
CV	Fogo	Agriculture-Local food prodution	Suifogo (production of livestock products ranging from sausages, cheeses and pork, beef and goat meat)	https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100057416291303
STP	Príncipe	Agriculture-Local food production	HBD Príncipe - Paciência Organic Chocolate	https://www.hbdprincipe.com/pt/paciencia-organic/
STP	São Tomé	Agriculture-Local food production	Diogo Vaz Chocolate	https://www.diogovaz.pt/

STP	São Tomé	Agriculture-Local food production	Claudio Corallo	https://www.claudiocorallo.com
STP	São Tomé	Agriculture-Local food production	CECAB - Cooperativa de Produção e Exportação de Ca	https://www.cecab.st/
STP	São Tomé	Agriculture-Local food production	CECAFEB - Cooperativas de Exportação de Café Biológ	https://www.facebook.com/p/Cooperativa-Cecafeb-S%C3%A3o-Tom%C3
Media				
Country	**Island**	**Intervention area**	**Institution**	**Website**
CV	-	Media-TV	Expresso das Ilhas	https://expressodasilhas.cv/
CV	Santiago	Media-TV	A Nação (Jornal Independente)	https://www.anacao.cv/
CV	Santiago	Media-TV	Santiago Magazine	https://santiagomagazine.cv/contactos
CV	Santiago	Media-TV	TCV - Televisão de Cabo Verde	https://www.rtc.cv/
CV	Santo António	Media-TV	Infor Press	https://www.inforpress.cv/pt
STP	São Tomé	Media-TV	STP Digital	https://stpdigital.net/
STP	-	Media-TV	Téla Nón	https://www.telanon.info/
STP	-	Media-TV	STP-Press	https://www.stp-press.st/
STP	-	Media-TV	Jornal Tropical	https://www.jornaltropical.st/
STP	-	Media-TV	Santola TV	
* Employee names and contact details have been omitted from this version for data protection reasons. However, this information is included within the project scope, with access restricted to authorized project participants.				

Promoting sustainable development in tropical islands: strengthening capacities for enhancing cultural heritage, traditional know-how, and local food production

Cultivar

Get in touch

Info@cultivar-project.eu

http://www.cultivarproject.eu

Social Media

"Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them."