



Cabo Verde

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Cabo Verde Country Profile

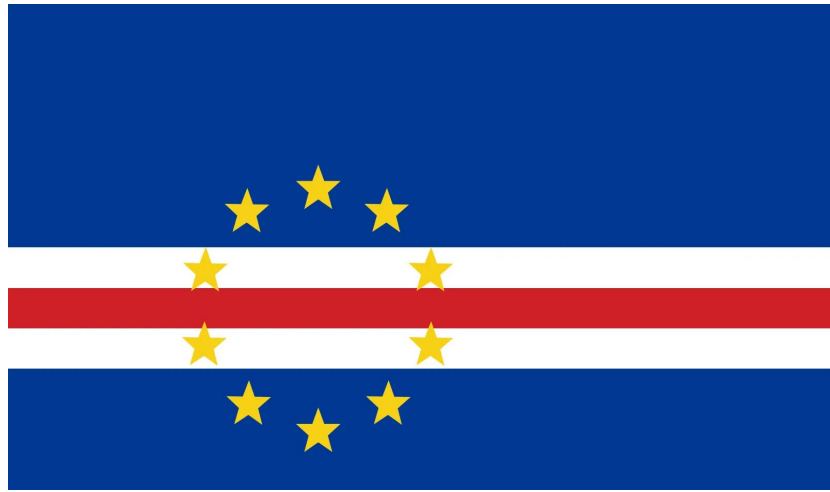


Figure 1: Flag of Cabo Verde ¹



Figure 2: Map of Cabo Verde ²

¹ "Flag of Cabo Verde." *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Encyclopaedia Britannica, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/flag-of-Cabo-Verde>. Accessed March 9, 2026.

² "Administrative Map of Cabo Verde." Nations Online Project, <https://www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/map/Cabo-verde-map2.htm>. Accessed March 9, 2026.

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General Country Profile

Geography and Population

The Republic of Cabo Verde, also known as Cabo Verde, is an archipelagic state and island country consisting of 10 islands: Santiago, Fogo, Maio, Brava, Boa Vista, Sal, São Vicente, Santa Luzia, Santo Antão and São Nicolau. Cabo Verde is located 500 km west of the northwestern coast of Africa with a total area of 4,033 sq km (1557 sq miles) and 965 km (600 miles) of north Atlantic Ocean coastline.^{3, 4} Nine of these islands are inhabited with a population of 522,331 as of 2023, with approximately half of the population in the capital Praia on Santiago island. Santa Luzia is the only island that is uninhabited, and Fogo has an active volcano Pico reaching a height of 2,829 meters (9,281 feet).^{4, 5}

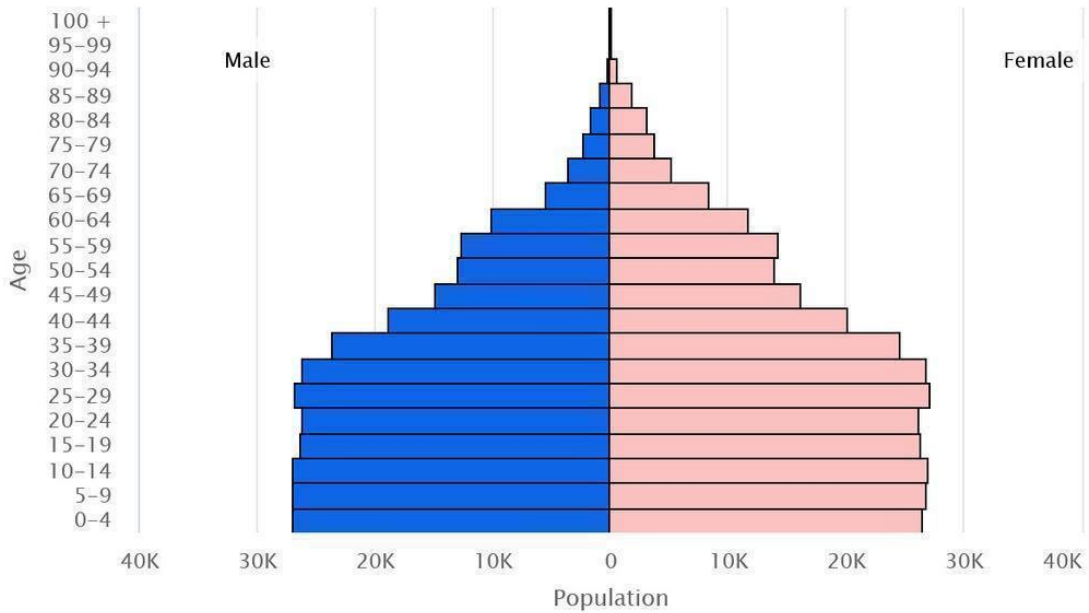
Overview of Cape Verde	
Capital	Praia
Largest city	Praia
Population World Rank	174
Percent of Total Population in Rural Areas	27%
Total Area	4,033 square kilometers (1,557 square miles)
Gross National Income Per Capita	\$10,190 (current international \$)
Life expectancy at birth	74.3 years
Infant mortality rate (per 1000 live births)	22.4
Total Expenditure on Health Per Capita	\$247.9 US (2023)
Total Expenditure on Health (% of GDP)	6.9% (2021)

Table 1: Population and Economic Overview of Cabo Verde ^{3, 4}

³ World Bank. *Cabo Verde Country Overview*. World Bank. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/caboverde>. Accessed April 8, 2025.

⁴ Central Intelligence Agency. *The World Factbook: Cabo Verde*. Central Intelligence Agency. <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/cabo-verde/>. Updated 2024. Accessed April 8, 2025.

⁵ Encyclopedia Britannica. *Cabo Verde Climate*. Encyclopedia Britannica. <https://www.britannica.com/place/Cabo-Verde/Climate>. Accessed April 8, 2025.



U.S. Census Bureau, International Database

Figure 3: Cabo Verde Population Pyramid.⁶

Climate and Season Cycles ⁵

Cabo Verde’s climate is generally mild, marked by steady temperatures ranging between the low 20s°C (low 70s°F) in February and humid months of August and September high 20s°C (low 80s°F). The islands’ climate is mainly influenced by the intertropical convergence zone (ITCZ), a region near the Equator where trade winds converge and air rises. Cool, dry winds of winter from Europe with a northward shift of ITCZ during the summer allows warmer humid Guinea Current to bring moisture and heat. Rainfall is highly variable and often scarce, with some years experiencing minimal to no precipitation. The official hurricane season for islands spans from early June to late November, peaking during August and September.

Education

The structured education in Cabo Verde begins with preschool at age 4 through secondary education to age 17.³ There are several higher education institutions, including the University of Cabo Verde and Jean Piaget University of Cabo Verde.⁷

⁶ U.S. Census Bureau. Cabo Verde Population Pyramid (2023). International Database. U.S. Census Bureau. <https://www.census.gov/data-tools/demo/idb/#/country?YR=2023&FIPS=CV>. Accessed April 8, 2025.

⁷ World Higher Education Database (WHED). List of Institutions in Cabo Verde. https://whed.net/results_institutions.php?Chp1=Cabo%20Verde. Accessed April 8, 2025.

History and Politics

Pre-Colonial and Colonial History ⁸

The first recorded sightings of the Cabo Verde islands occurred in the mid-15th century by several Portuguese explorers, including Diogo Gomes. Prior to these reports, there is no conclusive evidence that the islands had ever been inhabited.

In 1492, Portuguese settlers began colonizing the island of Santiago, initially attempting to cultivate sugarcane as they had done in Madeira. However, this effort was largely unsuccessful due to the islands' arid climate. The strategic significance of Cabo Verde later shifted from agriculture to its role in the transatlantic slave trade.

The islands became a vital hub for trade between the New World, Europe, and the island settlers, serving as a point where enslaved people were exchanged for raw materials. It is estimated that tens of thousands of enslaved individuals were transported from the African mainland to Cabo Verde before being shipped primarily to the New World, especially northern Brazil.

Ribeira Grande—now known as Cidade Velha—was the most prosperous city during this period. However, it became a frequent target for pirates, including the English and the French, and was famously attacked by forces under Francis Drake in 1712. Due to these threats, the administrative capital was relocated to Praia by 1770. The slave trade was officially abolished in 1876, following its economic decline, persistent droughts, and widespread government corruption.

In 1951, Cabo Verde's status shifted as it was reclassified by Portugal from a colony to an overseas province. During 1956, the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cabo Verde (PAIGC) formed with the goal of achieving independence through peaceful means. However, following nonviolent protests, Portuguese authorities responded with violent repression and arrests. This response by Portugal convinced PAIGC leadership that armed struggle was the only viable option to ending colonial rule. After extensive military preparation, the PAIGC launched an armed resistance campaign in 1963, which steadily gained ground over the next decade. The movement suffered a major loss when its leader, Amílcar Cabral, was assassinated in January 1973. These events—alongside protracted colonial wars in other Portuguese territories—contributed to political unrest in Portugal, culminating in the April 25, 1974 Carnation Revolution. The new Portuguese government quickly opened negotiations with African liberation movements.

⁸ Encyclopedia Britannica. History, Geography, & Culture of Cabo Verde. Encyclopedia Britannica. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/history-of-Cabo-Verde>. Accessed April 8, 2025.

Post-Colonial History ⁸

Cabo Verde gained independence on July 5, 1975, with Aristides Pereira as president and Pedro Pires as prime minister. After a 1980 coup in Guinea-Bissau ended hopes of unity, Cabo Verde's PAIGC split and became the PAICV. The country remained a one-party state until 1990, when dissidents formed the Movement for Democracy (MpD), which won the 1991 elections. MpD candidate António Monteiro became president and was re-elected in 1996.

Economic struggles persisted, and in 2001, the PAICV regained power as Pires narrowly won the presidency amid claims of irregularities. Food shortages worsened that year, increasing reliance on aid. Pires defeated Carlos Veiga again in 2006, but constitutional limits barred a third term. Jorge Carlos Fonseca of the MpD won the 2011 runoff election.

In 2013, Cabo Verde requested that its Portuguese name be used internationally. The MpD won the 2016 parliamentary elections, and Fonseca was re-elected with a wide margin. Economic growth followed, driven by tourism and reforms, but the COVID-19 pandemic caused a 14.8% contraction in 2020. The MpD held its majority in 2021, but José Maria Neves of the PAICV won the presidency and was inaugurated on November 9.

Languages, Dialects, and Religion ⁴

The official language of Cabo Verde is Portuguese. Crioulo (Cabo Verdean Creole), a Portuguese-based Creole, is also widely spoken with two main dialects. As of 2021, a population survey of religion reported 72.5% Roman Catholics followed by 4% Protestant and 15.6% no religious affiliation.

Government and Legal System ⁴

Cabo Verde is a parliamentary republic government with branches of government including the executive, legislative or national assembly, and judicial branch. The executive branch has a head of government, Prime Minister Jose Ulisses Correia e Silva since April 22, 2016, who is nominated by the National Assembly (Legislative branch) and appointed by the president. The president is elected by absolute majority popular vote in two rounds and serves a 5-year term. The current President and chief of state is Jose Maria Pereira Neves, elected on November 9, 2021.

The National Assembly is unicameral, with 72 seats all directly elected based on a proportional representation electoral system with 5 year office terms. There are 9 political parties. The current elected parties include the Movement for Democracy (MpD) with 38 seats, the African Party of Independence of Cabo Verde (PAICV) with 30 seats, and the Union for an Independent Democratic Cabo Verde (UCID) with 4 seats. In the chamber, the current percentage of women is 44.4%. The next expected election date is April 2026.

The highest court of the judicial branch is the Supreme Court of Justice, organized into civil, criminal, and administrative sections and consisting of the Chief Justice appointed by the president, and at least seven judges. All judges are appointed for life by the Chief Justice in consultation with the Superior Judicial Council, a 16-member independent body, responsible for selecting three of the judges. Subordinate courts include appeals, municipal, audit, military, fiscal, and customs courts.

According to the Worldwide Governance Indicators, Cabo Verde ranks highly in categories such as control of corruption and voice and accountability, while scoring lower in government effectiveness and regulatory quality.⁹

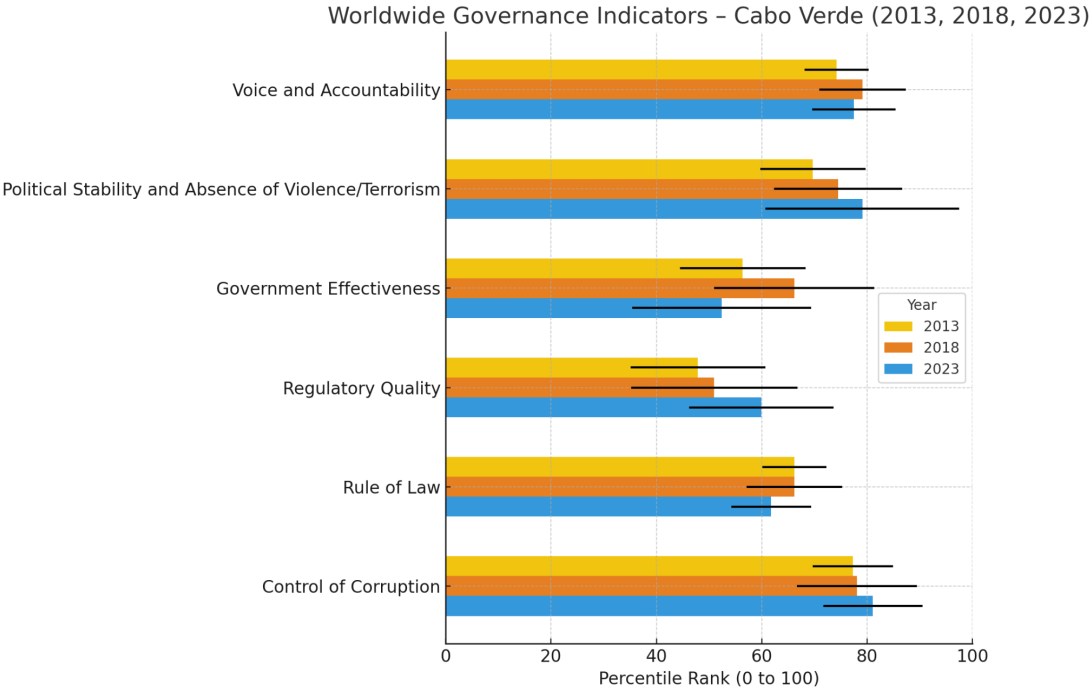


Figure 4: Worldwide Governance Indicators - Cabo Verde (2013, 2018, 2023)⁸

Economy and Employment

Cabo Verde, with a Human Development Index value of 0.668 in 2023, is in the Medium human development category, positioning it at 135 out of 193 countries and territories.¹⁰ Cabo Verde is a middle-income, politically stable, and developing economy.⁵ As of 2023, the country’s gross domestic product (GDP) was \$2.534 billion, with a GDP per capita of \$4,850, though the country’s GDP growth often fluctuates due to its dependence on tourism-intensive activities and its

⁹ World Bank. Worldwide Governance Indicators. World Bank. <https://databank.worldbank.org/source/worldwide-governance-indicators#>. Accessed April 14, 2025.

¹⁰ United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Countries and Territories: CPV. <https://data.undp.org/countries-and-territories/CPV>. Accessed May 21, 2025.

vulnerability to climate-related shocks.^{5, 11, 12} The economy is largely service-based, with the tourism sector accounting for approximately 70% of GDP.⁵ Tourism directly contributes around 24% of GDP (pre-COVID) through employment in hotels, restaurants, and tour services, and indirectly supports jobs in construction, retail, and artisanal crafts.¹³

Despite limited rainfall and arable land, agriculture employs 10.1% of the population and contributes 4.6% to the national GDP.^{5, 13, 14} Key agricultural products include corn, sugarcane, bananas, and beans. However, due to low domestic yields, a large portion of the country's food is imported.⁵

The total labor force is estimated at 223,000 individuals aged 15 and older. Unemployment remains a significant challenge, affecting roughly 12% of the labor force.^{5, 11}

Physical and Technological Infrastructure

Telecommunications

Mobile broadband is the dominant mode of internet access, with more than 80% of the population having access to 4G coverage.¹⁵ Internet penetration has increased steadily in recent years, however coverage gaps continue in rural areas on islands of Brava, Fogo and São Nicolau.¹⁵ Cabo Verde's government ministry of Digital Economy and Innovation is currently investing in digital infrastructure, including submarine fiber-optic cables and partnerships with satellite providers like Starlink, European Investment Bank and World Bank to improve connectivity in remote areas.^{16, 17}

Electricity¹⁸

More than 90% of Cabo Verde's population has access to electricity, with access lower in rural areas. Cabo Verde depends on imported fossil fuels for energy, which is nearly 80% of the total energy consumption. However, wind and solar energies account for about 20% of electricity generation. Cabo Verde is set to generate 50% of electricity from renewables by 2030, with the

¹¹ African Development Bank. Cabo Verde Economic Outlook. African Development Bank. <https://www.afdb.org/en/countries/west-africa/cabo-verde/cabo-verde-economic-outlook>. Accessed April 8, 2025.

¹² World Bank Group. GDP per capita (current US\$) - Cabo Verde. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD?locations=CV>. Accessed May 21, 2025.

¹³ U.S. Commercial Service. Cabo Verde - Tourism. U.S. Department of Commerce. <https://www.trade.gov/country-commercial-guides/cabo-verde-tourism>. Accessed April 8, 2025.

¹⁴ Statista. Share of Economic Sectors in Cabo Verde GDP. Statista. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/727230/share-of-economic-sectors-in-the-gdp-in-cabo-verde/>. Accessed April 8, 2025.

¹⁵ Internet Society Pulse. Cabo Verde Country Profile. Internet Society. <https://pulse.internetsociety.org>. Accessed April 8, 2025.

¹⁶ TechPoint Africa. Starlink Launches in Cabo Verde. TechPoint Africa. <https://techpoint.africa/news/starlink-launch-cabo-verde/>. Accessed April 8, 2025.

¹⁷ European Investment Bank. Cabo Verde Connectivity Programme. European Investment Bank. <https://www.eib.org>. Accessed April 8, 2025.

¹⁸ Africa Energy Portal. Cabo Verde Country Energy Profile. Africa Energy Portal. <https://africa-energy-portal.org>. Accessed April 8, 2025.

goal of achieving 100% by 2050.¹⁹ Projects such as mini-grids on Fogo Island are helping provide clean energy access to remote and rural communities.²⁰

Transportation ²¹

Cabo Verde's island geography presents logistical challenges, making air and sea transport critical for inter-island connectivity. The country has several ports, including major ones in Praia, Mindelo, and Palmeira, which support trade and passenger travel. Recent infrastructure programs—supported by international partners—have been launched to enhance non-motorized urban mobility through the upgrading of roads, drainage systems, and sidewalks (US \$12 million), alongside investments in climate-resilient transport infrastructure aimed at improving all-season connectivity and reducing vulnerability to natural hazards (US \$21 million).^{22, 23, 24}

Water and Sanitation

The islands experience chronic scarcity of water because there is minimal rainfall and limited freshwater resources.²⁵ The drinking water comes from groundwater extraction or desalination.²⁶ Urban areas benefit from better quality of water as well as sanitation services compared to rural regions that experience limited access.²⁵ From 2005 to 2015, the government's major infrastructure investments expanded piped water access to 43% and doubled sewer network connections.²⁶ The country continues to rely on international aid for long-term solutions to water and sanitation needs.²⁷

¹⁹ CNN Business. Cabo Verde Wants to Run on 100% Renewable Energy [Video]. CNN Business. Published January 31, 2020. <https://www.cnn.com/videos/business/2020/01/31/Cabo-verde-renewable-energy-africa-mpa.cnn>. Accessed April 8, 2025.

²⁰ ECOWAS Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency. Mini-Grid Inauguration on Fogo Island. ECREEE. <https://www.ecreee.org>. Accessed April 8, 2025.

²¹ Public-Private Infrastructure Advisory Facility (PPIAF). Cabo Verde Country Report. PPIAF. <https://www.ppiaf.org>. Accessed April 8, 2025.

²² World Bank. Project Appraisal Document on a Proposed Credit to the Republic of Cabo Verde for the Improving Connectivity and Urban Infrastructure in Cabo Verde Project (Report No. PAD5265). World Bank. Published October 31, 2023. https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/099110223091038881/pdf/BOSIB0a92cca5e086088860283311a51beb.pdf?_gl=1*8lqqtm*_gcl__au*OTYwMzM3NDg4LjE3MjEwNTEzODk. Accessed April 8, 2025.

²³ Times Aerospace. New Airline Hopes for Cabo Verde. Times Aerospace. Published November 12, 2024. <https://www.timesaerospace.aero/news/air-transport/new-airline-hopes-for-cabo-verde>. Accessed April 8, 2025.

²⁴ Cook N. Cabo Verde: In Brief (CRS Report No. R48128). Congressional Research Service. Published July 15, 2024. <https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/R48128>. Accessed October 20, 2025.

²⁵ United Nations Office for Sustainable Development (UNOSD). Cabo Verde SDG Profile. United Nations. <https://unosd.un.org>. Accessed April 8, 2025.

²⁶ Millennium Challenge Corporation. Water, Sanitation and Hygiene in Cabo Verde. Millennium Challenge Corporation. <https://www.mcc.gov>. Accessed April 8, 2025.

²⁷ World Bank. Improving Water and Sanitation Services in Cabo Verde. World Bank. <https://www.worldbank.org>. Accessed April 8, 2025.

National Health Care Profile

Life Expectancy at Birth

In Cabo Verde, life expectancy at birth has increased by 1.46 years from 71.7 [70.9 - 72.6] years in 2000 to 73.2 [72.6 -73.8] years in 2021. Over this time period, females have consistently had higher life expectancy at birth compared to males.²⁸

Life expectancy at birth

The average number of years that a newborn could expect to live.
Cabo Verde, by sex, 2000 - 2021.

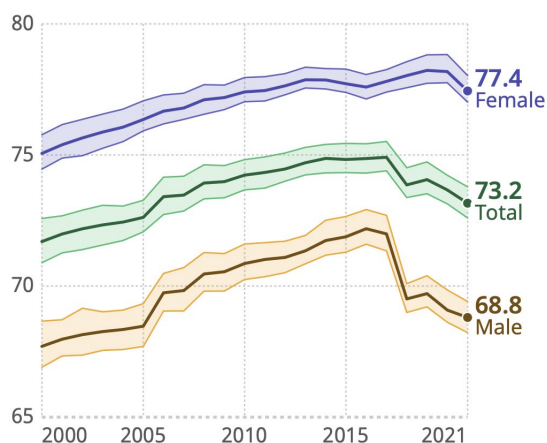


Figure 5: Life Expectancy at Birth in Cabo Verde²⁸

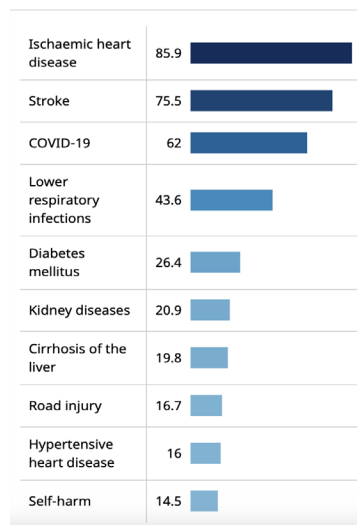


Figure 6: Top Causes of Death, Cabo Verde,

Morbidity and Mortality

An analysis of mortality stratified by the individual Cabo Verde islands from 1995 to 2018 showed that Santiago islands present the highest proportion of deaths (52.1% of all deaths in Cabo Verde), followed by São Vicente (17.2%), Santo Antão (11.3%), Fogo (7.7%), and São Nicolau (4.1%). The first four islands are the most populous islands in Cabo Verde (2010 Census) and represent 92.4% of mortality in the period 1995 to 2018.²⁹

Non-communicable diseases cause approximately 60% of all deaths in the country, with the highest cause of mortality are diseases of the circulatory system, including ischemic heart disease and stroke (Figure 6).^{28, 29} The age-standardized mortality rate across four major non-

²⁸ World Health Organization. Cabo Verde. World Health Organization; 2025. <https://data.who.int/countries/132>. Accessed April 19, 2025.

²⁹ Varela DV, Martins MDRO, Furtado A, et al. Spatio-temporal evolution of mortality in Cabo Verde: 1995-2018. PLOS Glob Public Health. 2023;3(3):e0000753. doi:10.1371/journal.pgph.0000753

communicable diseases (cardiovascular disease, chronic respiratory disease, cancer, and diabetes) was 549 per 100,000 in males and 399 per 100,000 in females in 2021.³⁰

In 2020, maternal mortality rate was 56 [33.4 - 88.2] per 100,000 live births, worsened by 5 since 2012. The under-five mortality rate was 12.29 per 1,000 live births in 2022, improving by 0.5 since 2021 and well below the SDG target of 25 per 1,000 live births. The neonatal mortality rate has decreased from 12 per 1,000 live births in 2015 to 8.72 [7.71 - 9.8] per 1,000 live births in 2022, below the SDG target of 12 per 1,000 live births.^{28, 30}

Greatest Threats to Public Health

Cabo Verde's geographic location in the Atlantic and its climate changes put the country at an increased risk for threats to public health. Within the past few decades, Cabo Verde has faced several vector-borne disease epidemics: dengue in 2009-2010, ZIKA virus disease in 2015-2016 (both for the first time) and malaria epidemic in 2017. Other public health emergencies include a severe drought in 2017 and volcanic eruptions.

Malaria had been endemic in all 10 islands of Cabo Verde since settlement in the 15th century, resulting in over 10,000 cases and 200 deaths annually in the 1940s before targeted nation-wide interventions.³¹ After two unsuccessful campaigns to eliminate malaria in 1967 and 1978, Cabo Verde was certified in 2024 by WHO as malaria-free, becoming the third African country to be declared malaria-free.³²

The prevalence of HIV in Cabo Verde is low: 0.6% in the general population (0.7% in women and 0.4% in men).³³ As of 2023, Cabo Verde achieved two of the three 95-95-95 goals for HIV, reaching 98-98-52: 98% of people living with HIV know their status, 98% of people living with HIV who know their status are on antiviral treatment, but 52% of people living with HIV and on treatment have suppressed viral loads.³⁰

The mortality rate of tuberculosis cases (excluding HIV coinfection) has remained low and constant between 2015 and 2023 at 4.3 per 100,000 population. The tuberculosis mortality rate among those who are HIV positive has slightly increased between 2015 to 2023 from 1.6 to 1.8 per 100,000.³⁰

³⁰ World Health Organization Regional Office for Africa. Cabo Verde: Universal Health Coverage/Communicable and Non-communicable Diseases. Published August 2023. <https://www.afro.who.int/sites/default/files/2023-08/Cabo%20Verde.pdf>. Accessed May 21, 2025.

³¹ de Jager, Tiaan, and Taneshka Kruger. "Cabo Verde Is the Third African Country to Eliminate Malaria: Here's How." Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance – VaccinesWork, 2 Feb. 2024, <https://www.gavi.org/vaccineswork/Cabo-verde-third-african-country-eliminate-malaria-heres-how>. Accessed April 19, 2025.

³² World Health Organization. WHO certifies Cabo Verde as malaria-free, marking a historic milestone in the fight against malaria. Published January 12, 2024. <https://www.who.int/news/item/12-01-2024-who-certifies-cabo-verde-as-malaria-free--marking-a-historic-milestone-in-the-fight-against-malaria>. Accessed April 19, 2025.

³³ Moreira Ferreira MC, DePina AJ, Ribeiro NN, Niome M, Busière S. People with disabilities in Cabo Verde, an unresolved issue: HIV prevalence, knowledge, attitudes and practices. *AIDS Care*. 2022;34(suppl 1):71-78. doi:10.1080/09540121.2022.2040725

Public Health Campaigns

Cabo Verde's increasing life expectancy led to a growing population above 60 years of age from 7.6% in 2010 to 10% in 2021, which resulted in health system challenges. In August 2019, WHO Cabo Verde began to implement the Integrated Care for Older People (ICOPE) guidelines with the goal of providing quality prevention and health promotion programs that would allow the country to adapt to the aging population.³⁴ The ICOPE guidelines propose evidence-based recommendations for health professionals to prevent, slow or reverse declines in physical and mental capacities of older people, focusing on the following six domains of intervention: limited mobility, depressive symptoms, cognitive decline, malnutrition, visual impairment, and hearing loss. From September 2021, trainings by WHO Cabo Verde were organized for stakeholders, including politicians, 320 health professionals from various fields, social workers, researchers, community representatives, and the elderly. To monitor the implementation and outcomes of ICOPE, three pilot health centers (Órgãos, São Domingos and Ribeira Grande de Santiago) have been renovated to provide adequate health care and are being followed. Initial reports show progress and improved access and quality of service and patient-centered care in the elderly population, and at the III Congress of Good Practices in Health in 2022, Cabo Verde was awarded third place in recognition of the implementation of the initiative and progress made in the West African region.³⁴

In addition to programs addressing the needs of an aging population, Cabo Verde has also embraced digital health innovations to improve access to specialized medical care across its islands. The Cabo Verde Telemedicine Program (CVTP) was established in 2012 with the objective of organizing a referral and counter-referral system between hospitals and health centers and to maintain computerized patient records.³⁵ Telemedicine has increased access to specialized care, including neurology, cardiology, orthopedic surgery, general surgery, endocrinology, otolaryngology, urology, and dermatology. The CVTP has prevented unnecessary and costly transfers and is praised as a great implementation of telemedicine in Africa.³⁶

Beyond expanding healthcare delivery systems, Cabo Verde has also invested in maternal and infant health initiatives that support early-life nutrition and improve neonatal outcomes. Cabo Verde is home to one of Africa's first human breast milk banks, following South Africa and Cameroon.^{37, 38} Sponsored by Brazil, the country's human milk bank launched in August 2011 in Hospital Agostinho Neto in Praia, which has facilities for collecting, pasteurizing, freezing, and

³⁴ World Health Organization. Cabo Verde invests in comprehensive essential services to offer better quality of care to the elderly. World Health Organization; 2022. <https://www.who.int/about/accountability/results/who-results-report-2020-mtr/country-story/2022/Cabo-verde-invests-in-comprehensive-essential-services-to-offer-better-quality-of-care-to-the-elderly>. Accessed April 23, 2025.

³⁵ Sanine PR, Gayoso MV, Domingues FS, Carvalho EM, Castanheira ER, Spagnuolo RS. [Cabo Verdean health system: propositions and challenges]. *Rev Saúde Pública de Mato Grosso do Sul*. 2020;3(1):7-17.

³⁶ Azevedo V, Latifi R, Parsikia A, Latifi F, Azevedo A. Cabo Verde Telemedicine Program: An update report and analysis of 2,442 teleconsultations. *Telemed J E Health*. 2021;27(2):172-177. doi:10.1089/tmj.2020.0001

³⁷ Obeng-Gyasi B, Nolting TM, Byrd K, Obeng-Gyasi E, Obeng CS. A review of the current status, challenges, and opportunities of human milk banks in Africa for reducing infant mortality. *Women*. 2025;5(1):6. doi:10.3390/women5010006

³⁸ Brazilian Cooperation Agency. Food for Social Transformation: The Brazilian Program for International Cooperation in HMB. <https://www.gov.br/abc/pt-br/centrais-de-conteudo/publicacoes/documentos/food-for-social-transformation-the-brazilian-program-for-international-cooperation-in-hmb.pdf>. Accessed May 21, 2025.

storing the milk for up to six months. Milk supplies come from local women who have either given birth at the hospital or from volunteers responding to awareness campaigns.³⁹ In September 2024, the Fiocruz Foundation, the most prominent institution of science and technology in health in Latin America, chose Cabo Verde as one of three pilot countries to implement the Fiocruz Certification Program for Human Milk Banks. In collaboration with Brazil's Ministry of Health and the Brazilian Cooperation Agency, this certification program aims at "strengthening the scientific, productive, technological, managerial and quality assurance capabilities of the Global Network of Human Milk Banks."⁴⁰

Cabo Verde's child immunization coverage rates have been historically high. In 2021, the third dose of DTP-containing vaccine was 93%, and the coverage for the first dose of the measles vaccination was 95%. As a result, there have been no recent significant outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases.³⁰

Complementing these preventive efforts, Cabo Verde has also implemented comprehensive reproductive health initiatives aimed at improving maternal health and expanding access to sexual and reproductive health services. The National Reproductive Health Program (PNSR) in Cabo Verde, launched in 2001, was designed to broaden access to sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services across various segments of the population.⁴¹ Originally focused on women, the program evolved to include adolescents, young people, and adult men, aligning with the principles of the International Conference on Population and Development. The program aimed not only to expand the availability of SRH services but also to improve education and preventive healthcare in this domain, contributing to national development efforts. To achieve its goals, the PNSR implemented several key interventions. One of the most notable was the integration of SRH education into schools and youth centers through partnerships with the education sector. This allowed young people to access accurate and age-appropriate information about sexual health. The program also sought to address cultural norms and beliefs that hindered open discussions about sexuality and reproductive health, aiming to transform attitudes and promote responsible health-seeking behaviors. Since Cabo Verde's independence in 1975, the country has made significant progress in reducing maternal and infant mortality, and the PNSR has played a crucial role in that improvement. It has increased public awareness and utilization of SRH services among its target groups. However, challenges persist. Issues such as unplanned pregnancies, unsafe abortions, and the continued risk of HIV infections highlight existing gaps in service delivery and the need for more effective implementation. These challenges underscore the importance of ongoing efforts to strengthen the program and ensure that SRH services are accessible, culturally appropriate, and responsive to the needs of all individuals in Cabo Verde.⁴¹

³⁹ Villanueva T. First human breast milk bank opens in Africa. *BMJ*. 2011;343:d5179. doi:10.1136/bmj.d5179

⁴⁰ Fiocruz. Fiocruz launches certification program for HMB cooperating countries. Published September 9, 2024. <https://fiocruz.br/en/noticia/2024/09/fiocruz-launches-certification-program-hmb-cooperating-countries#:~:text=Cabo%20Verde's%20network%20of%20milk%20banks%20has,three%20initial%20members%20for%20the%20Certification%20Program.&text=Its%20main%20goal%20was%20to%20collect%20and,babies%2C%20those%20with%20nutritional%20problems%20or%20allergies>. Accessed May 21, 2025.

⁴¹ Silva PS, Monteiro N, Martins MDO, Moura L. National reproductive health program in Cabo Verde: a successful strategy for the implementation of sexual and reproductive rights. *Cien Saude Colet*. 2018;23(11):3631-3636. doi:10.1590/1413-812320182311.22222016.

National Health Care Structure

Structure and Policy³⁵

Cabo Verde's health system shares similar principles and guidelines to the Brazilian public health system. The Cabo Verdean Constitution of 1992 and Basic Health Law guarantees universal access to health, comprehensive treatment, and equity in healthcare provision, regardless of an individual's economic circumstance. The healthcare facilities in Cabo Verde are classified into three levels: primary, secondary, and tertiary care. Primary health care is provided through public clinics known as Health Centers spread across the islands; these are open 24 hours a day and serve as the first point of access and integration with the health system and provide patients with services such as vaccinations, maternal and child health, and basic medical care. Patients needing a higher level of care can be referred for secondary care that is offered at regional hospitals, which handle more specialized medical services. Tertiary care is concentrated in the two major public Central Hospitals, namely Hospital Agostinho Neto in Praia on Santiago island in the south, and Hospital Dr. Baptista de Sousa in Mindelo on São Vicente island in the north, offering general medical services, specialized treatments, and emergency care.⁴²

The formulation and implementation of health policies are carried out at the ministerial level by the Ministry of Health and the Office of Studies and Planning, followed by the Directorate-General of Health and the Public Health Coordination Office. At the regional level, the system is composed of thirteen Health Delegations.³⁵

Number of Healthcare Facilities

Cabo Verde's healthcare system is a blend of public and private services. The public sector comprises 32 Health Centers, 17 Basic Sanitary Units, 5 Reproductive Health Centers, 4 Regional Hospitals, and 2 Central Hospitals, strategically distributed across the nine inhabited islands. In addition, there are 40 public and 33 private pharmacies, and the country has implemented a national telemedicine program, facilitating remote consultations and medical advice.⁴³ More than 80% of the population lives within 30 minutes of a health facility.⁴⁴

Private hospitals, such as Clínica Madalena on São Vicente Island and Clínica Santa Isabel on Boa Vista island, offer modern facilities and higher quality services and treatments.

The implementation of telemedicine and the computerization of services have been crucial in improving the communication between the different levels of care. The two central hospitals are connected to all the health centers, allowing providers at all levels of care to see the medical history of patients.³⁵

⁴² Immigration Hub 360. Understanding Healthcare in Cabo Verde: System, Quality, and Accessibility. Published July 2024. <https://immigrationhub360.com/2024/07/healthcare-in-Cabo-verde/>. Accessed May 20, 2025.

⁴³ Fernandes JA, Monteiro MZ, Borges E, Gomes B. User satisfaction with health services and healthcare delivery in Cabo Verde. *BMC Health Serv Res.* 2025;25(1):12375. doi:10.1186/s12913-025-12375-8

⁴⁴ World Health Organization Regional Office for Africa. Cabo Verde shows us the health care progress we want to see across Africa. Published May 23, 2023. <https://www.afro.who.int/news/cabo-verde-shows-us-health-care-progress-we-want-see-across-africa>. Accessed May 21, 2025.

Quality of Care ³⁵

While Cabo Verdean health policy champions universal health access and positions Primary Health Care (PHC) as the system's cornerstone and primary entry point, its practical implementation faces significant hurdles. A persistent hospital-centric model draws the majority of government funding and social prestige towards hospitals, often at the expense of PHC units. This disparity, coupled with a training focus that undervalues PHC, incentivizes health center professionals to seek transfers to hospitals, further weakening primary care services. Consequently, many health centers are structured to address acute complaints rather than offering comprehensive or chronic disease management, mirroring a hospital-like approach with limited resources and lower problem-solving capacity compared to emergency services. This organizational flaw paradoxically fuels the population's tendency to bypass PHC for immediate, disease-focused hospital care, despite co-payment schemes intended to enhance PHC quality. The disconnect is exacerbated by a lack of communication and articulation between different levels of care, preventing a holistic approach to patient health and reinforcing a consumer-driven, instant-gratification culture within the health system.

Healthcare Expenditure

In 2021, Cabo Verde's healthcare expenditure was 6.9% of GDP.²⁸ This translates to about USD \$248 per capita.⁴⁵ In 2021, the overall budget for the Ministry of Health and Social Security (MSSS) operating expenses was 6,416,935,604 CVE (Cabo Verde Escudo), representing 10.93% of the total state operating budget.⁴⁶

Public healthcare costs are funded by the State, Social Security, and direct user out-of-pocket payments and donations from international organizations; private health care facilities are funded through insurance and personal fees.⁴³ Around 40% of Cabo Verdeans have social insurance through their employers, entitling them to more health services as well as sick pay.⁴⁴

All Cabo Verdeans are entitled to a basic package of health services that includes antenatal care; emergency treatment; and treatment and prevention for HIV, tuberculosis and malaria. Certain medicines and medical consultations do involve a small surcharge of US \$1, significantly less than the cost of treatment.⁴⁴

For patients who need treatment that is beyond the capacity of Cabo Verde's health care system, the Government provides flights to Portugal and covers medical treatment. Each year, 600 - 700 people receive this level of care.⁴⁴

⁴⁵ Population Reference Bureau. Total Spending on Health. <https://www.prb.org/international/indicator/totalspending/snapshot>. Accessed May 22, 2025.

⁴⁶ Ministério da Saúde e da Segurança Social. Relatório Estatístico 2020. Governo da República de Cabo Verde, 2020, <https://minsaude.gov.cv/download/114/relatorio-estatistico/7089/relatorio-estatistico-ministerio-da-saude-2020.pdf>

Health Workforce and Infrastructure

Number of Hospital Beds

As of 2020, there were 553 hospital beds in the central hospitals: 353 at Hospital Agostinho Neto and 200 at Hospital Dr. Baptista de Sousa.⁴⁶ Table 2 shows the distribution of beds among the various medical services in both hospitals.

Distribuição das camas por serviço nos Hospitais Centrais
Distribution of beds by service in Central Hospitals

Serviços	HAN	HBS	Total
	Hospital Agostinho Neto	Hospital Dr. Baptista Sousa	
	N.º Camas	N.º Camas	N.º Camas
	Number of beds	Number of beds	Number of beds
Medicina (Medicine)	28	38	66
Pediatria (Pediatrics)	60	28	88
Ginecologia (Gynecology)	23	36	59
Obstetrícia (Obstetrics)	32		32
Neonatologia (Neonatology)	20	3	23
Cirurgia Geral (General Surgery)	60	39	99
Orto -Traumatologia (Ortho - Traumatology)	58	22	80
Psiquiatria (Psychiatry)	40	08	48
Tisiologia (Phthiology - Tuberculosis)	...	13	13
U.C.E. (I.C.U - Intensive Care Unit)	...	3	6
Quartos particulares (Private Rooms)	...	10	10
Puerpério (Postpartum)	32	...	32
Total	353	200	553

Fonte: Relatórios de Hospital Dr. Agostinho Neto e Hospital Dr. Baptista Sousa
Source: Reports from Dr. Agostinho Neto Hospital and Dr. Baptista Sousa Hospital

Table 2: Distribution of beds by service in Central Hospitals⁴⁶

Number and Distribution of Healthcare Providers

When Cabo Verde gained independence in 1975, there were only 13 doctors.⁴⁷ As seen in Table 3 from a 2022 report by the Cabo Verde Ministry of Health and Social Services, the health workforce has had tremendous growth. In 2021, there were 378 doctors (7.82 per 10,000 inhabitants). This breaks down to 160 medical specialists (3.31 per 10,000) and 218 general practitioners (4.51 per 10,000).⁴⁶ There were 928 nurses (19.19 per 10,000 inhabitants) and 390 health technicians (8.06 per 10,000 inhabitants). In 2020, there were a total of 109 pharmacists: 46 pharmacists worked in public pharmacies and 63 pharmacists worked in private pharmacies. Of the pharmacists in the public pharmacies, 34 (73.9%) were based in Praia, and 6 (13%) based in São Vicente. Of the pharmacies in private pharmacies, 31 (49%) were based in Praia and 8 (12.6%) were based in São Vicente.⁴⁶

⁴⁷ The Borgen Project. HIV/AIDS in Cabo Verde. Published March 18, 2020. <https://borgenproject.org/cabo-verdes-hiv/>. Accessed May 21, 2025.

Efetivos	2017			2018			2019			2020			2021		
	População (Population)	Efetivos (Personnel)	Rácio/10,000 (Ratio/10,000)	População (Population)	Efetivos (Personnel)	Rácio/10,000 (Ratio/10,000)	População (Population)	Efetivos (Personnel)	Rácio/10,000 (Ratio/10,000)	População (Population)	Efetivos (Personnel)	Rácio/10,000 (Ratio/10,000)	População (Population)	Efetivos (Personnel)	Rácio/10,000 (Ratio/10,000)
Profissionais de Saúde habitante <i>(Resident Health Professionals)</i>	537661	2826	52,6	537661	3235	60,17	550483	3407	58,82	550483	3521	63,96	483628	3296	68,15
Apoio operacional <i>(Operational Support)</i>	537661	1075	19,9	537661	1604	29,83	550483	1597	29,01	550483	1600	29,07	483628	1600	33,08
Total de Médicos <i>(Total Physicians)</i>	537661	338	6,28	537661	430	8	550483	380	6,9	550483	358	6,50	483628	378	7,82
Médicos Especialistas <i>(Specialist Physicians)</i>	537661	182	3,38	537661	198	3,68	550483	259	4,7	550483	155	2,82	483628	160	3,31
Médicos Clínicos Gerais <i>(General Practitioners)</i>	537661	156	2,9	537661	167	3,11	550483	123	3,32	550483	198	3,60	483628	218	4,51
Enfermeiros <i>(Nurses)</i>	537661	754	14	537661	770	14,32	550483	764	13,88	550483	887	16,11	483628	928	19,19
Técnicos <i>(Technicians)</i>	537661	321	5,97	537661	363	6,75	550483	334	6,7	550483	323	5,87	483628	390	8,06

Fonte: Serviço de Gestão de Recursos Humanos/DGPOG/MS Source: Human Resources Management Service / DGPOG / Ministry of Health

*Table 3: Number of Healthcare Providers: Evolution of ratios/10,000 inhabitants from 2016 to 2020*⁴⁶

Ministries that Impact Healthcare⁴⁸

In Cabo Verde, the Ministry of Health and Social Security (*Ministério da Saúde e da Segurança Social*) is responsible for developing, implementing, and evaluating national health policy. The country's broader social protection system combines contributory social insurance and government-funded social assistance programs that provide coverage for risks such as old age, disability, sickness, maternity, work injury, unemployment, and family benefits. These programs are administered primarily through the National Social Insurance Institute (*Instituto Nacional de Previdência Social, INPS*), which collects contributions from workers and employers and provides financial benefits including sickness and maternity payments. Together, these structures support the financing of healthcare services and provide financial protection for workers and vulnerable populations in Cabo Verde.

⁴⁸ Social Security Administration. Social Security Programs Throughout the World: Africa, 2019 – Cabo Verde. U.S. Social Security Administration, <https://www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/progdesc/ssptw/2018-2019/africa/cabo-verde.html>. Accessed 10 Mar. 2026.

National Radiology Profile

The radiology workforce in Cabo Verde faces significant challenges in terms of numbers and distribution, and detailed information about the country's radiology infrastructure is limited. Much of the information provided below is derived from a personal communication with Dr. Susan Weinberg, the current RAD-AID Cabo Verde Program Director.

Radiology Workforce and Training and Professional Representation

Accessibility to imaging in Cabo Verde varies per island, with the majority of services performed in the capital Praia on Santiago Island.⁴⁹ As of 2018, there were 3 radiologist physicians in Cabo Verde.⁵⁰ Prior to January 2024, there were 6 radiology technologists at Hospital Dr. Baptista de Sousa, the main hospital in São Vicente. However, with three individuals retiring simultaneously in January 2024 upon reaching the mandatory government retirement age of 65, only three technologists remained in the department in early 2024.⁵¹ All ultrasounds in Cabo Verde are performed by radiologists, not technologists. Soft tissue biopsies, such as breast biopsies, are done surgically rather than under radiologic guidance.

There are no institutions in Cabo Verde for the training of imaging personnel or medical physicists.⁵⁰ Radiology training for Cabo Verdean professionals typically occurs internationally, most commonly in Portugal.⁴⁹ A significant portion of the radiology workforce includes non-Cabo Verdean professionals, many from Cuba, who work primarily in the private sector.⁵¹ While there is no dedicated professional society for radiology in Cabo Verde, the Cabo Verdean American Medical Society (CVAMS)—a Massachusetts-based nonprofit—collaborates with RAD-AID Cabo Verde to improve radiology services to improve access to radiology services in the country.⁵²

On-Site Radiology Readiness Assessment: Equipment Inventory and Distribution

In 2023, RAD-AID signed an agreement to collaborate with CVAMS and a 2024 MOU with Hospital Dr. Baptista de Sousa.⁴⁹ Radiology Readiness Assessments were conducted in early 2024 at Hospital Agostinho Neto in Praia on Santiago island and Hospital Dr. Baptista de Sousa in Mindelo on São Vicente island, revealing significant disparities in imaging capacity. Hospital Agostinho Neto, the better-equipped facility, operates a busy CT scanner along with X-ray and ultrasound services but lacks MRI capabilities and does not conduct advanced interventional procedures like angiography.⁵¹

At Hospital Dr. Baptista de Sousa, the CT scanner—previously owned by an external entity—continues to function within the hospital, along with X-ray and ultrasound units. However,

⁴⁹ RAD-AID International. Cabo Verde. <https://rad-aid.org/countries/africa/cabo-verde/>. Accessed May 22, 2025.

⁵⁰ Kawooya MG, Kiseembo HN, Remedios D, et al. An Africa point of view on quality and safety in imaging. *Insights Imaging*. 2022;13:58. doi:10.1186/s13244-022-01203-w

⁵¹ Weinberg S. Director of RAD-AID Cabo Verde. Personal communication. April 28, 2025.

⁵² Cabo Verdean American Medical Society. About Us. <https://cvaphysicians.org/about-us/>. Accessed May 22, 2025.

mammography services were discontinued, and soft tissue biopsies are still done surgically.⁵¹ Fogo Island, where much of RAD-AID's earlier efforts were focused, has access to X-ray and ultrasound.⁴⁹ As of 2017, Cabo Verde had only one MRI unit, though its location remains unspecified.⁵³

Private clinics, in contrast, tend to be better resourced and are equipped with CT scanners, MRI units, and mammography machines.⁵¹ However, a lack of available technologists remains a barrier. Cabo Verde had a training program for technologists about seven years ago, but no new programs have been implemented since. Many of those previously trained have shifted to the private sector due to better pay, leaving the public sector critically understaffed.⁵¹

Information is limited regarding the prevalence of local manufacturers, and detailed methods for maintaining equipment and sourcing consumables like contrast agents and injectors. A specific regulatory body for the quality of medical imaging equipment is not explicitly mentioned in the literature.

Interventions and Accomplishments ⁵¹

Historically, all soft tissue biopsies in Cabo Verde required surgical intervention. In April 2024, a RAD-AID team led by Dr. Weinberg conducted a training course in Praia to enable local personnel to perform ultrasound-guided biopsies.

To address the severe shortage of radiologic technologists in São Vicente, RAD-AID designed and launched the X-Ray Machine Operator Program in September 2024. The program began with three to four months of asynchronous virtual training, followed by hands-on clinical instruction in January 2025 from rotating teams of U.S.-based instructors from institutions such as Quinnipiac, Stony Brook, CCNY, University of Cincinnati, and Beth Israel. Eight candidates were selected from a pool of 20 and all passed their final exam in March 2025.

However, these newly trained technologists have not yet begun working in X-ray due to financial constraints and bureaucratic barriers. Budget cuts at Hospital Dr. Baptista de Sousa have prevented the hospital from hiring the trainees, as doing so would require backfilling their current positions elsewhere. While the RAD-AID team has offered to subsidize the transition, concerns about perceived favoritism have hindered progress. A formal report has been drafted detailing the training outcomes, and efforts are underway to collaborate with another organization in Cabo Verde to obtain official certification for the trainees. Once certified and working, the goal is to provide further training in CT and mammography.

In Praia, RAD-AID installed a CT scanner in late 2024 to facilitate hands-on training. While Hospital Agostinho Neto currently performs around 10 emergency CT scans daily, one of their contract-based CT technologists is nearing the end of their term. The hospital is eager to begin scheduling

⁵³ Ogbole GI, Adeyomoye AO, Badu-Pepurah A, Mensah Y, Nzeh DA. Survey of magnetic resonance imaging availability in West Africa. *Pan Afr Med J.* 2018;30:240. doi:10.11604/pamj.2018.30.240.14000

elective CT scans but will require additional technologists to support this expansion. RAD-AID has been asked to assist with training new CT technologists to meet this need.

A significant development involves a potential collaboration with Medweb to install a Picture Archiving and Communication System (PACS) system in Cabo Verde.⁵⁴ In November 2024, RAD-AID began conducting preliminary meetings to explore this initiative, which at first faced bureaucratic and political obstacles. The healthcare system in Cabo Verde is fragmented, with Santiago (southern island) and São Vicente (northern island) independently developing separate electronic medical records systems. In January 2025, the RAD-AID team met with the head of CVAMS, and São Vicente expressed interest in proceeding with the PACS collaboration with Medweb, with hopes that Praia would follow suit.

An essential step in implementation was identifying a local IT champion. After months of searching, Mr. Olivera—a software and computer engineer at Hospital Dr. Baptista de Sousa—was selected to fulfill this role. In January 2026, RAD-AID Informatics Program Leaders Celeste Garcia and Kevin Conway traveled alongside RAD-AID Cabo Verde Program Director, Dr. Susan Weinberg and Medweb Technical Support Engineer, Dave Cundiff, to Hospital Dr. Baptista de Sousa in São Vicente and collaborated with hospital staff on the installation of the MedWeb PACS. The team successfully installed the server, deployed the viewer across clinical areas, onboarded users, and integrated CR imaging workflows.⁵⁵

Conclusion

Significant strides have been made in increasing radiology access and training in Cabo Verde, primarily through the collaborative work of RAD-AID and partner organizations. Immediate priorities include overcoming financial and bureaucratic hurdles to allow newly trained X-ray technologists to begin practicing. Their employment will pave the way for expanded training in CT and mammography.

The success of the Medweb PACS installation at Hospital Dr. Baptista de Sousa in São Vicente “reinforced the importance of local partnerships, standardized healthcare IT, and building sustainable technical capacity to improve patient care in resource-limited settings,” according to Kevin Conway, Associate Program Manager of Informatics at RAD-AID International.⁵⁵ This progress highlights a critical opportunity to modernize medical imaging infrastructure across Cabo Verde. Following the successful installation of PACS, the Cabo Verde RAD-AID team intends to launch a comprehensive breast cancer screening training program. This crucial initiative will necessitate further specialized training for CT and mammography technologists prior to its full implementation. Sustained support—financial and institutional—is essential for the success of these ongoing and future initiatives.

⁵⁴ Medweb. Virtual Care | Medweb | San Francisco. <https://www.medweb.com/home>. Accessed June 2, 2025.

⁵⁵ RAD-AID International. “RAD-AID Global Health Radiology.” LinkedIn, https://www.linkedin.com/posts/rad-aid-international_radaid-globalhealth-radiology-activity-7429527624533725184-romu. Accessed 12 Mar. 2026.

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