



Study visit to Cabo Verde

From Portugal to Cabo Verde: bringing a proven migrant integration model closer to communities

As migration to Cabo Verde — one of Africa's most developed countries — has grown in recent years, supporting migrants to integrate into local communities has become an increasingly important challenge. In an archipelago where services are spread across islands and municipalities, migrants often struggle to navigate administrative procedures and access support close to where they live. At the same time, Cabo Verde has long-standing migration ties with Portugal, a country widely recognised for its comprehensive migrant integration model. Coop4Int was created to bring these two realities together: helping Cabo Verde adapt elements of Portugal's experience while strengthening its own emerging integration system. By connecting Portuguese expertise with national and municipal authorities, frontline service providers, civil society organisations and migrant communities themselves, **the project helped turn migrant integration from a policy ambition into a more structured, locally anchored public service.**

Meeting migrants where they are

Field visit by service operator



Coop4Int strengthened migrant integration in Cabo Verde by **linking national policy with services delivered close to where migrants live and work**. The project combined four components: bringing support to communities through Local Immigration Units and outreach activities; strengthening the capacity of frontline institutions; expanding vocational and entrepreneurial training opportunities for migrants; and reinforcing national knowledge through the Migration Observatory, development of studies and awareness raising. Together, these elements improved access to services and coordination among institutions working on migrant integration.

A central pillar of the project was strengthening the capacity of migrant integration service providers, including staff of the High Authority for Immigration and other institutions working directly with migrants. Training and exchanges helped **practitioners to better understand migration dynamics and the linguistic, cultural and social barriers migrants face**.

As one service operator reflected: *"If I were to leave this job, I would leave richer than when I started [...] I've received many trainings that serve not only my professional work but also my personal life. I've learnt a lot about empathy."*

Bridging institutions and communities

The impact of Coop4Int became particularly visible as the project coincided with a sharp rise in demand for migrant integration support services following an extraordinary regularisation process and the move of application processing to an online platform. Many migrants struggled to navigate digital systems and complex documentation requirements, while immigration services faced growing pressure. In this context, **Local Immigration Units provided over 6,000 services to migrants and organised 30 information and awareness raising sessions, becoming an essential bridge between migrants and institutions.** As one service operator described their role, Local Immigration Units had become “the speakers between the people in the public institutions and the communities.”



A path to integration

The Immigrant Entrepreneur Support Service also supported migrants in building more stable futures. Through close to 300 consultations, migrants like a Liberian entrepreneur have used the opportunity to strengthen his Portuguese language skills and develop his small business. With business guidance and support, he expanded his economic activity, began pursuing further studies and is now working toward family reunification. His journey **reflects what successful integration can look like: gaining skills, building a livelihood and planning a long-term future in the country he now calls home.**



Project closing conference in Praia

Lasting foundations for integration

Today, **five Local Immigration Units continue operating across four islands and serving 12 municipalities**, and provide migrants with accessible support and guidance. Coordination between national authorities and municipalities remains in place, while the Migration Observatory continues to strengthen the collection and use of data for planning migrant integration services and policies.

About the MPF

This grant project is part of the EU-funded Migration Partnership Facility (MPF), managed by the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) to support the external dimension of the EU's migration policy. MPF funds projects that promote dialogue and cooperation on migration and mobility between EU Member States and partner countries outside the EU.

About the project

Strengthening Migrant Integration through Cooperation between Portugal and Cabo Verde (Coop4Int) was implemented under the EU-funded Migration Partnership Facility (MPF) and supported cooperation between Portuguese and Cabo Verdean institutions working on migrant integration. The project focused on strengthening local integration services, building the capacity of public institutions and civil society, supporting migrants' economic integration through training and entrepreneurship initiatives, and improving data and coordination through the Migration Observatory and digital tools.

About the evaluation

This Impact Note draws on findings from the final evaluation of the Coop4Int project, conducted between July 2025 and February 2026. The evaluation combined desk research with fieldwork in Cabo Verde, including interviews, focus group discussions and site visits across several municipalities. The evaluation was led by Policy Impact Lab, which forms part of a consortium of six consultancies and NGOs: Blomeyer & Sanz, Diversity Development Group, Migration Policy Group, Policy Impact Lab, Samuel Hall and Tandans.

