Cabo Verde, situated in the central Atlantic Ocean, consists of numerous ecologically diverse and interconnected islets, along with 10 volcanic islands, nine of which are inhabited, with around 550,000 people living there. Recognised as a significant global hotspot for marine biodiversity, it boasts a vast Exclusive Economic Zone spanning 834,419 km². The archipelago supports a broad diversity of marine life, including more than 20 cetacean species, and its beaches are critical breeding grounds for all five endangered sea turtle species. Its coastal waters also contain around 60 species of sharks and rays, as well as a variety of bird species, including the Egyptian vulture, which is listed as Endangered on the IUCN Red List. Cabo Verde's marine environment and resources are critical to over 80% of its residents, who rely on small-scale fisheries for a living, as well as the expanding tourism industry.

Cabo Verde relies on healthy fish stocks for food security, but it faces direct and indirect threats to marine life and ecosystems in its waters and coastlines. Key challenges include the overexploitation of marine resources due to fishing pressures, both legal and illegal, as well as its vulnerability as a Small Island Developing State with limited natural resources and susceptibility to drought. The direct impacts of climate change on the marine environment, along with indirect effects on human behaviour, pose significant challenges. These are compounded by social factors such as poverty and limited job opportunities beyond fishing, and the resulting dependence on marine resources. Cabo Verde's previous efforts to establish marine and terrestrial protected areas, along with a proposed nationwide network of MPAs, encountered challenges such as limited enforcement, low public awareness, and chronic underfunding, which hindered effective management and conservation.

The project seeks to support Cabo Verde in establishing 314 km² of MPAs and improve the management of 804 km² of MPAs across several islands and islets, focusing on critical habitats for threatened species. This globally significant MPA network will benefit biodiversity and local communities. Through effective MPA management, the project aims to facilitate the recovery of ecosystems and commercially or ecologically important species, while strengthening resilience to climate change. Around 35,300 fishing-dependent individuals are expected to benefit directly from improved livelihoods, including through capacity building for sustainable MPA co-management and the promotion of gender equity. Enhanced multi-stakeholder engagement and sustainable financing options will feed into existing and new Management Plans that will further improve MPA management effectiveness and ensure the project's long-term sustainability.
### KEY TARGETS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Target</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Newly created MPAs:</td>
<td>314 km²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effectively managed MPAs:</td>
<td>804 km²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of beneficiaries:</td>
<td>35,375</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### KEY ACTIVITIES AND AREAS OF WORK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>MPA GOVERNANCE</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>▶ Expand the national MPA network by driving the creation of two new MPAs, with four existing land-based protected areas being enlarged by a marine component</td>
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<tr>
<td>▶ Support the development of appropriate zonation, including No-Take Zones and/or restricted use zones, within new and existing MPAs, and facilitate their demarcation</td>
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<tr>
<td>▶ Co-develop or update Management Plans for MPAs to include measures such as climate change mitigation and adaptation</td>
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<tr>
<td>▶ Promote the creation of a national, legal co-management framework for MPAs by engaging government and stakeholders through new and updated Management Plans</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>▶ Support the implementation of locally suitable and viable options to improve and/or diversify livelihoods by e.g. facilitating training in business and financial management</td>
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<tr>
<td>▶ Promote gender equity through e.g. conducting gender analysis, developing a Gender Action Plan, and providing leadership skills and training for women</td>
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<tr>
<td>▶ Support communities and enhance their knowledge of sustainable co-management of MPAs, and promote information on MPAs within the tourism sector</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>SPECIES CONSERVATION/SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>▶ Develop a shared and standardised national project database that provides the biodiversity and ecosystem data needed to inform MPA functioning, and which will be accessible to authorities and relevant stakeholders</td>
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<tr>
<td>▶ Conduct biomonitoring of key marine and terrestrial species and ecosystems throughout the project and analyse and report findings, producing regular summaries for dissemination at local and national scales</td>
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<tr>
<td>▶ Create marine-resource-use maps, including of fishing areas and practices, through participatory baseline mapping activities</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>HABITAT CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>▶ Conduct aerial monitoring and mapping of important coastal habitats, such as coral reefs, to identify changes in degradation and support the assessment of climate change impacts</td>
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