

A Road to Growth in Cape Verde

João Soares lives by the road between Órgãos and Pedra Badejo in Cape Verde and his daily commute to work used to take more than one hour. During the rainy season, this road would occasionally close down due to floods and as a consequence, João would be forced to stay home for several days. Thanks to the construction of the road funded by the U.S. Government's Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), João's access to work, nearby towns, and health and community services has improved and his commute now takes only 15 minutes. As João says, "For me, this road is very important to the island of Santiago and Cape Verde; the island's economy will now certainly be developed."

João Soares's neighbor, Lola Brito Vieira believes that the road is the best thing that has happened to her. She says, "I work in the fields, and for the past 10 years, I would come home full of pain throughout my body because the long walk hurt my knees and legs. Walking on the road at night was even worse because I couldn't see anything—it was a punishment. Now everything has changed—I can take public transportation to work, there is lighting on the road, and I am thinking of opening up a business to sell food."

Thanks to MCC's \$110 million compact with the Government of Cape Verde, what used to be a cobblestone road is now a synergy of hope and tangible, results-based economic growth. The new road between Órgãos and Pedra Badejo on Santiago Island runs over hilly terrain through one of the island's most productive agricultural valleys. Cape Verdean families, farmers, businesses, nongovernmental organizations, and social service providers who live and work in communities along the road can now reach markets more efficiently and will have better access to local community services. MCC funds projects that will be sustainable in the long-run and works with highly qualified contractors, supervising engineers, and Cape Verdeans who take it upon themselves to follow MCC's standards to ensure that all environmental, social,



The MCC-funded infrastructure project is bringing new opportunities for those living along the road. Basilio (pictured left), a 47 year-old farmer says, "This road brings joy. I did not know what asphalt was and had only heard about it on the radio. Now I see asphalt in front of my house and I can say with certainty that my future is promising due to all the business opportunities that have been created."



The road before Cape Verde's MCC Compact was an impediment to growth for the local economy.



Now, the new road between Órgãos and Pedra Badejo is 10 kilometers long and 6 meters wide, has a drainage system, signage, lighting, and all safety and environmental standards in place. Nearly 12,500 people are expected to benefit from this road now, increasing to more than 15,000 over the next twenty years.

and safety precautions have been addressed. This includes the thorough implementation of MCC's equitable and transparent resettlement activities and the establishment of a viable road maintenance fund for upkeep of the roads.

MCC invests in projects that have an integrated approach to ensuring sustainable poverty reduction. For instance, within the infrastructure project in Cape Verde, in addition to funding for the construction of three roads on Santiago Island, MCC is funding the construction of four bridges on Santo Antão Island. These linkages will allow agricultural products to reach markets quicker and in better condition, thereby increasing the incomes for farmers and helping address issues of food security. MCC is also funding the modernization of the Port of Praia, which will facilitate the export of agricultural products and making port operations more efficient and secure.

These projects, taken together, will improve Cape Verde's infrastructure network by reducing overall transportation costs, increasing market integration, boosting agricultural productivity, and developing the private sector, benefiting over 300,000 people. These projects will complement and provide important opportunities for progress under U.S. Government and donor programs underway in Cape Verde. The completion of this road construction—the first such infrastructure project completed in Africa through MCC funds—is a testament to the partnership between MCC and the people of Cape Verde in delivering tangible results to reduce poverty and stimulate sustainable economic growth.