Seychelles’ First Open Government National Action Plan 2019-2021

Foreword

It is with great pride that I am signing off on the Foreword of Seychelles’ first Open Government Partnership’s National Action Plan (NAP).

During his first public address following his inauguration, President Faure, mentioned the three principles that should guide the work of the public service going forward: Transparency, Accountability and Good Governance. This National Action Plan pays homage to the dedication and effort that our public service has been putting to those principles.

The journey to get to this submission has been an interesting and educational one. As outlined later in this document, Seychelles’ journey towards Results Based Management started off in 2013. A lot of progress has been made since, and this progress is what has allowed us to be in a position to submit this NAP today.

As expected, when one makes progress one suffers from diminishing returns. It gets ever harder to keep progressing; and as the proverbial ‘low hanging fruits’ are cultivated, the ‘fruits’ that are left are harder to cultivate. In order to improve certain things for the majority, there are some losers. Furthermore, there comes a need for change and adaptation, a change in peoples’ mindset and behavior as well as a shift from the traditional ways of doing things. To achieve this, more work was needed in the areas of transparency, accountability and good governance within the public service.

When the World Bank introduced us to the Open Government Partnership in 2017, we knew that therein lay the way to maintain the implementation of Results Based Management. A structured way to better involve civil society in public administration will definitely improve the services we provide to our citizens. This two-year National Action Plan represents the first of many; and we look forward to the evolution of our relationship with civil society.

It is my sincere hope and expectation that this new relationship will bear fruit. A new perspective will be brought to our policy making, and to civil society’s expectations of Government. This improved understanding between the two parties will benefit our citizens, which remains our ultimate aim as Government.

The commitments outlined in this document have been developed in conjunction with civil society and are ambitious. It will warrant great efforts from both parties in order to be achieved. I am confident that we can make it and I look forward to delivering on these promises.

Last, but not least, let me take this opportunity to thank the men and women of our public service who have been working towards a more open Government, our gratitude also goes to the members of civil society who have agreed to partner with us to help us improve our services and with it the lives of our citizens.

The Hon. Vincent Meriton

Vice President of the Republic of Seychelles

1. Introduction

Seychelles is a small, island state that has in the past decade strengthened its economy and governance institutions. This has allowed it to become the only high income country in Africa, as well as the best performing African country in terms of Transparency International’s Perception of Corruption Index 2019.

In order to consolidate this progress and make greater strides in the future, Seychelles has embarked on an ambitious journey to elaborate its 15-year vision – Vision 2033, which articulates the aspiration for the country as “‘*A resilient, responsible and prosperous nation of healthy, educated and empowered Seychellois living together in harmony with nature and engaged with the wider world’.* The Vision will be achieved through three 5-year National Development Strategies (NDSs), the first of which was launched on the 5th of August 2019. Amongst the many aspirations of Vision 2033 is the goal of improving governance by increasing transparency, accountability, the use of technology in government, the rule of law, and citizen engagement.

Civil Society in Seychelles also continues to grow in strength. There are about three hundred organisations which can be classified as CSOs in the country. These legally registered organisations are not-for-profit, voluntary-based operating independently from Government. The first civil society platform was created 29 years ago and was called Liaison Unit of Non-Governmental Organisations of Seychelles (LUNGOS). In 2008, LUNGOS signed a formal agreement with Government, which set the scene for stronger engagement, collaboration and actions. In 2014, LUNGOS revised its manner of operations and transformed into the Citizens Engagement Platform Seychelles (CEPS), which has to date, a total of 114 accredited members. CEPS also acts as an interface with state and non-state actors, provides capacity building for CSOs, educates citizens on values of a well-functioning society, and through the platform, CSOs are represented on national Boards. In order to broaden its network CEPS is accredited with international organisations such as SADC-CNGO and Forus. Additionally, it has signed MOUs with civil society platforms of other countries, notably Kenya and Mauritius with the aim of creating and strengthening partnerships through meaningful peer exchange and dialogue.

Seychelles hopes that by joining OGP, we will become familiar with good governance practices from across the world which will assist us in fostering greater partnerships for co-creation between Government and Civil Society. This will ultimately aid Seychelles in attaining the good governance aspirations of Vision 2033.

1. Open Government Partnership (OGP) Initiative

Open Government Partnership brings together government reformers and civil society leaders to create actions plans that make governments more inclusive, responsive, and accountable. To become an OGP member, countries must first endorse a high-level Open Government Declaration and commit to delivering a two-year action plan developed with public consultation, as well as independent reporting on their progress going forward.

The Open Government Partnership formally launched on 20 September 2011 with eight founding governments: Brazil, Indonesia, Mexico, Norway, the Philippines, South Africa, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Since that time, 79 OGP participating countries and 20 subnational governments have made over 3,100 commitments to make governments more open and accountable.

OGP is overseen by a Steering Committee, including representatives of governments and civil society organizations.

Excerpt taken from [*www.opengovpartnership.org/campaigns/global-report/collective-results-open-government-ogp*](http://www.opengovpartnership.org/campaigns/global-report/collective-results-open-government-ogp)*.*

1. Efforts to Date

In 2013, the **Results Based Management (RBM)** policy was approved with the aim of improving the effectiveness and accountability of the public sector. The Government recognised that addressing the efficiency of public spending is at the core of decreasing the gap in public service delivery. The reforms also had the goal of improving transparency and openness.

The RBM policy laid the foundations of a robust framework to enable a shift from traditional public-sector management to results-oriented management. The Government had to manage for measurable outputs (leading to policy outcomes for people), as opposed to simply managing inputs (activities and resources). The shift required a mindset change towards greater accountability by both the public institutions and individuals working in the public service.

The integrated RBM system is made up of four key components that provide the necessary framework for planning, implementing, monitoring and reporting on organisational performance, and linking organisational performance to personnel performance. The components are:

* Strategic Planning
* Programme Performance Based Budgeting (PPBB)
* Performance Monitoring and Evaluation (PM&E)
* Performance Management System (PMS)

The RBM Policy reinvigorated strategic planning, and in 2017, the formulation of a national 15-year vision – **Vision 2033** – began. In the spirit of civic engagement and transparency, widespread consultations were conducted with representatives from fourteen sectors (Governance, Tourism, Fisheries, Private, Housing, Health, Education, Environment, Agriculture, Energy, Social, Financial, Transport, and Infrastructure), in addition to youths and the elderly. Challenges and opportunities were discussed, and the aspirations of the people formed the basis for Vision 2033, articulated as *“A resilient, responsible and prosperous nation of healthy, educated and empowered Seychellois living together in harmony with nature and engaged with the wider world”.*

Vision 2033 will be implemented through three five-year **National Development Strategies (NDSs)**, the first of which (NDS 2019-2023) was launched on 5th of August 2019. The first NDS is supported by six key pillars. The pillars represent the areas of focus for the next five years, and are in line with the seventeen goals of the United Nation’s 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the aspirations of the African Union’s Agenda 2063. The six pillars are:

* Good Governance
* People at the Centre of Development
* Social Cohesion
* Innovative Economy
* Economic Transformation
* Environmental Sustainability & Resilience.

Good governance was identified as a key pillar that will facilitate the achievement of Vision 2033 because of its central role in the proper functioning of all institutions across all pillars. In ensuring accountability, transparency and participation, good governance will ensure that the whole of society takes ownership of Vision 2033 and the first NDS, which will allow for its proper implementation.

Goal 1 under the Good Governance pillar echoes OGP principles:

*Goal 1: A transparent, accountable and citizen-centric government that delivers efficient, effective and quality services.*

This goal is concerned with the performance and accountability of the three branches of government, with the aim of building a Government able to deliver efficient, quality, cost effective, and relevant services, with emphasis placed on accountability, public participation, and technology and innovation.

The strategic interventions to achieve Goal 1 includes the implementation of a Code of Governance for proper public enterprise oversight, enhancement of Public Financial Management (PFM), implementation of the Access to Information Act, and the expansion of digital government.

The **Public Financial Management (PFM)** **Act** was enacted in 2012 to repeal and replace the Public Finances Act, 1996. The PFM Act provides for the development of an economic and fiscal policy framework for Seychelles; the financial management of the Government; the responsibilities of persons entrusted with financial management in the Government; the transparent and effective management of the finance of Seychelles; the control of finance of Government, statutory corporations and other bodies under the control of the Government.

In 2018, the **Access to Information Act** was enacted. The right to seek and receive information is guaranteed under Article 28 of the Constitution of Seychelles, and, the Access to Information Act, 2018 provides the legal framework within which this fundamental right shall be exercised. The Access to Information Act seeks to empower the Seychellois people by shifting the paradigm of governance from one of secrecy to one of transparency. Consequently, it will facilitate an open and transparent public administration and thereby strengthen freedom of information and expression, encourage democratic participation, provide legal safeguards for the individual as well as strengthen confidence in the public authorities and control by the public.

More recently, in April 2019, a new **Code of Corporate Governance** for public enterprises developed by the Public Enterprise Monitoring Commission (PEMC) was officially launched. Its aim is to improve the governance of public sector enterprises by articulating principles for Board Leadership and Effectiveness; Audit, Risk Management and Internal Control; Remuneration; Relations with Stakeholders; and Monitoring Code Performance.

The Government recognized that promoting transparency and openness will increase the trust between public sector enterprises and their stakeholders.

1. Developing this Plan

The Government initiated contact with OGP in October 2017, as part of the Government’s effort to support Results Based Management (RBM). The Results Based Management (RBM) policy was approved in 2013 with the aim of improving the effectiveness and accountability of the public sector. OGP was identified as an effective way to engage with Civil Society on RBM and therefore gain widespread support for RBM reforms, especially as this relates to the use of technology as a facilitator of transparency in Government.

By early 2018, all required documents were sent to OGP. After OGP determined Seychelles’ eligibility, a letter of intent was sent in July 2018. Seychelles was accepted into OGP on the 15th August 2018.

The NAP was subsequently prepared by a 12-member Drafting Committee comprised of individuals from both the Government and Civil Society. The Drafting Committee will work together with the RBM Committee (responsible for the implementation of the RBM reforms) to monitor the implementation of the NAP.

1. Commitments

The National Action Plan consists of 3 commitments, as outlined below:

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| **Themes** | **Commitment Number** | **Title** |
| Participation | 1 | Strengthening public participation in the budget process  |
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| Transparency  | 2 | Implementation of the Access to Information Act |
|  | 3 | Implementation of the Fisheries Transparency Initiative (FiTI) |
| Technology and Innovation | 4 | Creation of an E-Engagement portal to increase citizen responsiveness |

The Commitments are in line with Vision 2033 and were formed through the co-creation process between Government and Civil Society.

**Participation**

**Commitment 1:**  **Strengthening public participation in the budget process**

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| Commitment  |   |
| Strengthening public participation in the budget process |   |
|  August 2019 – June 2021 |   |
| New commitment |   |
| Lead implementing agency/actor | Department of FinanceCivil Society Engagement Platform (CEPS) |   |
| **Commitment description** |   |
| What is the public problem that the commitment will address? | In Seychelles, there are about three hundred organisations which can be classified as Civil Society Organisations (CSO). Many of these active organisations are accredited members CEPS – the platform for civil society organizations in Seychelles. CEPS was created on the 8th November 2014 after the dissolution of LUNGOS, and it was subsequently added to the portfolio of the Office of the Vice President. CEPS acts as an interface with state and non-state actors nationally and internationally, provides training and capacity development for CSOs, and enables civil society representation on national boards. However, there is still scope for increased civil society participation, especially in the budget process, and the policy and legislative review processeIn 2013, the Government started Programme and Performance Based Budgeting (PPBB). The PPBB approach is aimed at improving the Government’s ability to plan, prioritise, allocate, manage, control, and report on public funds and the achievement of governmental objectives. MoFTIEP engages mainly with the MDAs in the budgeting process; there is currently no formal mechanism for civil society engagement. To address this gap, a new framework for discussion between Government and civil society needs to be developed. Civil society engagement with regards to the policy making and legislative processes also requires strengthening. It is therefore important to work on a framework for this engagement, which will include, amongst others, a review of the Multi Stakeholder Group Act under the EITI, vis a vis the Access to Information Act, and a review of the Registration of Association Act. There will also be a need for training for civil society in relation to policy and legislation review.  |   |
| What is the commitment? | The commitment entails the strengthening of engagement between Civil Society and Government MDAs in the budget process, as well as the legal and policy review processes, to ensure more active public participation in decision making.  |   |
| How will the commitment contribute to solve the public problem? | Civil Society, in all its forms, will be a key stakeholder for engagement throughout the budget process and the legal and policy review process.  |   |
| Why is this commitment relevant to OGP values? | This commitment is relevant to the OGP values of transparency and public participation. This commitment will not only involve the public through the civil engagement platform in the budget process, it will also improve the quality of key output documents to ensure these are understandable by a wider audience. Since the commitment is relevant to civic participation, it will create and improve opportunities including capabilities for the public to inform or influence decisions.   |   |
| Additional information | The commitments in the NAP are in line with Seychelles’ Vision 2033 and the first National Development Strategy (NDS). Implementation of the Commitment will be monitored by the RBM Committee. |   |
| Milestone Activity with a verifiable deliverable | Start Date: | End Date: |   |
|  MoFTIEP to review the budget calendar to include engagement with the Citizens Engagement Platform Seychelles (CEPS) and other relevant CSOs. | December 2019 | February 2020 |   |
|  MoFTIEP to engage with CEPS and other relevant CSOs in the Budget Process according to the amended budget calendar | March 2020 | October 2020 |   |
| Training/sensitization programmes provided to CSOs on matters of policy and legal instruments (new laws etc) organized jointly between GOS and CEPS |  January 2020 |  June 2021 |  |
| **Budget** |   |
| SCR80,000 |  |
| **Contact Information** |   |
| Name of responsible person from implementing agency | Ms Irene Croisee |   |
| Title, Department | Comptroller General, Financial Planning and Control Division, Department of Finance |   |
| Email and Phone | icroisee@finance.gov.sc 4382004 |   |
| Other Actors Involved | Secretary of State for Finance, Comptroller General, Deputy Comptroller General, Director of Public Budget Management Section, Attorney General’s Office, and Registrar.  | Principal Secretary for Finance (as he is the PS for FPCD), Deputy Comptroller General, Director of Public Budget Management Section, Attorney General’s Office, and Registrar. |  |
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| CSOs, private sector, multilaterals, working groups | CEPS, OGP, World Bank, IMF |  |
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**Transparency**

**Commitment 2: Implementation of the Access to Information Act**

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| Commitment |
| Implementation Access to Information Act |
| October 2019 – June 2021 |
| New Commitment |
| Lead implementing agency | Information Commission |
| **Commitment description** |
| What is the public problem that the commitment will address? | Following the enactment of the Access to Information Act, 2018, public authorities and their respective officials are finding it hard to implement the new law, thus they are unable to provide the public with the information they need effectively.The public bodies are still unsure how to go about the process when addressing a request by the public and the public does not understand its right in relation to access to information and what is and what is not permissible under this new Act.The delay in establishing the Information Commission, as required by the Act, also caused a setback in the implementation of the new law as the Department of Information, under the Office of the Vice-President had to step in to assist public bodies, albeit, itself having to navigate in an unknown territory.There are also delays in setting up an ATI web page for proactive disclosure, and the poor management of information and records is constantly causing numerous problems when the public request information or their files. Civil society organisations are not equipped to better assist citizens in exercising their rights with regards accessibility to information.At present, citizens are not fully sensitized on the Access to Information Act, and how to go about acquiring the information/records they need.  |
| What is the commitment? | Public authorities and their respective officials will have to be trained and be sensitised to the principles and processes of the ATI Act. This includes ensuring the autonomy of appointed Information Officers.Citizens will also have to be sensitised on their rights vis à vis their constitutional right to access public information, about the ATI Act itself, and, how it can benefit them.Information Commissioners would also have to be trained on what is required of the Information Commission in its early stage; the role of the Commission and Information Officers; the sensitisation and education role of the Commission; the handling of appeal cases that are referred to the Commission and the monitoring and evaluation report writing of the Commission.Government will have to appraise the current situation and status of public records in all their entities, and also carry out an assessment as to what type of management information systems and data capture procedures and mechanisms exists, to enable ATI to take place.Government will also have to develop a simple but coherent legislative framework for management and accessing of Government information within the spectrum of digital government, through staged reforms (commencing with legislation regulating archives), supported by efficient and effective policies and practices.Civil society organisations will have to be trained and equipped to actively sensitize and educate the citizens/society. Sensitization campaigns for citizens, starting in schools and all educational establishments up to the elderly and persons with disabilities need to know this constitutional right and how to exercise it. |
| How will the commitment contribute to solve the public problem? | The commitment will provide the public authorities, the Information Officers with the right tools/materials to assist public request for information. Additionally, it will provide an opportunity for citizens and civil society organisations to collaborate with Government officials to address irregularities concerning the dispensation of information.The Information Commission would also be in a better position to know how to operate as a Commission and understand its role towards public entities, Information Officers and the public.A well-educated and sensitised society through accessible records and management information systems established through policies and legislation, strengthened and equipped CEPS secretariat and other civil society platforms to facilitate the process, will make access to information transparent, effective and timely. |
| Why is this commitment relevant to OGP values? | This commitment is relevant to access to information and civic participation because it will promote transparency, empower citizens, fight corruption and harness new technologies to strengthen governance.A record management system and simplified version of the Act will be created to make public information available to citizens, as well as improve the quality of information led by Government offices, ensuring that accountability is institutionalised and good governance takes place. |
| Additional information  | The commitments in the NAP are in line with Seychelles’ Vision 2033 and the first National Development Strategy (NDS). Implementation of the Commitment will be monitored by the RBM Committee. |
| Milestone status | Start Date: | End Date: |
| 1. Information Commission (in collaboration with the Department of Information) will conduct training programs for all Information Officers for the performance of their duties under the Act under the following themes:
2. Value of ATI and their role;
3. Receiving and responding to requests;
4. Proactive disclosure;
5. Records management
 |  October 2019 | June 2021 |
| 1. The Information Commission (in collaboration with the Department of Information) to facilitate training of ATI Commissioners and staff of the Information Commission by resource persons from ATI Commissions in comparable jurisdictions.
 | October 2019 | June 2021 |
| 1. Information Commission (in collaboration with the Department of Information) to sensitise and train public authorities in order to change the mind set of secrecy to one of civic participation, accountability and assistance to citizens.
 | February 2020 | February 2021 |
| 1. An appraisal of Government records throughout the Executive takes place to inform Government on the state of records and action required.
 | October 2019 | June 2021 |
| 1. An ATI web page for proactive disclosure operating in each and every Government entity.
 | October 2019 | June 2021 |
| 1. DICT has put in each Government entity a Management Information System.
 | February 2019 | June 2021 |
| 1. The Information Commission (in collaboration with the Department of Information) will earmark specific CSOs to actively take on the education and sensitization of citizens.
 | October 2019 | June 2021 |
| 1. The Information Commission (in collaboration with the Department of Information) will see that sensitization campaigns for citizens take place, starting in schools and all educational establishments, with the elderly and persons with disabilities also included.
 | September 2020 | June 2021 |
| 1. Train and equip civil society to deliver the sensitization campaigns
 | February 2020 | February 2021 |
| **Budget** |
| SCR 1,000,000 per year |
| **Contact information**  |
| Lead implementing agency | Information Commission  |
| Persons responsible from implementing agency | Ms. Thereza Dogley |
| Title, Department | CEO of the Information Commission  |
| Email and Phone | tdogley@infocom.sc, 4303188  |
| Other Actors Involved | Government Ministries, Department/Agency | Office of Vice PresidentDepartment of InformationInformation CommissionDepartment of Information Communication TechnologyDepartment of EducationDepartment of Legal Affairs  |
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| CSOs, private sector, multilaterals, working groups | Civil society platforms (CEPS)Individual CSOsCommunity Groups.OGP  |
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**Transparency**

**Commitment 3: Implementation of the Fisheries Transparency Initiative (FiTI)**

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| Commitment |
| Implementation of the Fisheries Transparency Initiative |
| June 2019 – June 2021 |
| New Commitment |
| Lead implementing agency | Blue Economy Department |
| **Commitment description** |
| What is the public problem that the commitment will address? | Coastal countries, like the Seychelles, face a complex challenge: ensuring that fishing and fish trade contribute to income, employment, food and nutrition for millions of people, while also conserving marine biodiversity for future generations.Seychelles is heavily reliant on its fisheries and the contribution to the GDP in 2013 according to the World Bank was reported as 8%, contributing 17% of the total employment of the population of only 94,000. The Seychelles also has one of the highest fish consumption per capita (circa 65kg per annum), making it the highest in AfricaWhile there are many aspects to achieve sustainable fisheries, the public availability of credible information is critical. Without transparency, governments cannot function to their potential. Transparency of information nurtures knowledge and the sharing of ideas. It also deepens the understanding of the important nature of the fisheries sectors, as well as the challenges that exist. Yet, in the Seychelles, certain information on our fisheries sector is not available at all, nor is it shared widely. Moreover, the dissemination of information is often not timely, of insufficient quality or objectivity, or presented in ways that make it inaccessible to our citizens. |
| What is the commitment? | The government of the Seychelles is committed to empowering all stakeholders in the fisheries industry to participate in its development and to hold the authority and decision makers accountable. Therefore, the government will establish a multi-stakeholder group, consisting of both industrial and artisanal fishermen, sports fishermen, civil society, government, and members of both political parties to implement the Fisheries Transparency Initiative (FiTI). The Fisheries Transparency Initiative (FiTI) seeks to increase transparency and participation in fisheries governance for the benefit of a more sustainable management of marine fisheries and the well-being of citizens and businesses that depend on the marine environment. The FiTI is a global multi-stakeholder initiative that defines for the first time what information on fisheries should be published online by public authorities. |
| How will the commitment contribute to solve the public problem? | Public access to information on how the Seychelles marine fisheries sector is being exploited is fundamental for good governance. Every stakeholder group, including local fishing communities, private companies, investors, retailers and partner countries engaged in fishing agreements stand to benefit from good and transparent management, ensuring a long-term contribution of the fisheries sector to the national economy and the fair distribution of revenues. Consequently, the impact of the FiTI does not lie only in the act of publishing information. It also ensures that this information is perceived by all relevant actors as credible, and that it contributes to the public debate in the Seychelles. For example, it is only normal that our citizens should know what fisheries agreements comprise of, what are the vessels licensed, the catch, the fees paid and what is the revenue is used for. |
| Why is this commitment relevant to OGP values? | This commitment is relevant to access to information and civic participation because it will promote transparency, empower citizens, and fight corruption.With the implementation of the FiTI, Seychelles will establish an annual process to publish the so-called FiTI Report, which* Demonstrates whether transparency requirements have been fulfilled, i.e. if the information published by national authorities is accessible and complete, and represents the best available information;
* provides a succinct summary of information on each transparency requirements to contribute to public debates; and
* communicates the recommendations of the National Multi-Stakeholder Group, including improving the publication of data on the transparency requirements in the public domain, e.g. government databases, websites, online reports.

Furthermore, the FiTI emphasises the need for national authorities to develop and strengthen their own systems for collating and publishing information online in a complete and accessible manner. |
| Additional information  |  |
| Milestone status | Start Date: | End Date: |
| 1. The FiTI National Multi-Stakeholder Group submits the Seychelles official FiTI Candidate Application to the FiTI International Board, in accordance with the FiTI Standard
 |  June 2019 | December 2019 |
| 1. The FiTI National Multi-Stakeholder Group publishes the Seychelles first FiTI Report (comprising of information from 2019), in accordance with the FiTI Standard
 | January 2020 | October 2020 |
| 1. The FiTI National Multi-Stakeholder Group communicates with all relevant stakeholders the results of the first FiTI Report.
 | November 2020 | March 2021 |
| 1. Train and equip small-scale fishing associations and civil society to understand and analyse key information of Seychelles fisheries management system.
 | November 2020 | June 2021 |
| **Budget** |
| SCR 50,000 per year |
| **Contact information**  |
| Lead implementing agency | Blue Economy Department (FITI Secretariat) |
| Persons responsible from implementing agency | Mr. Philippe Michaud |
| Title, Department | Special Adviser in the Office of the Vice President of the Republic |
| Email and Phone | Philippe.michaud@statehouse.gov.sc  |
| Other Actors Involved | Government Ministries, Department/Agency | * Office of Vice President
* Department of Fisheries
* Seychelles Fishing Authority
* Department of Blue Economy
* United Seychelles Party
* Linyon Demokratik Seselwa Party
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| CSOs, private sector, multilaterals, working groups | *Civil Society Platforms (CEPS):*- Sustainability for Seychelles- Seychelles, Sports Fishing Club- Transparency Initiatives (Seychelles- 1 Member and a Youth Grouping *Industry:*- Purse Seiners - Fishing Boat Owners Association- Fish Processor- Fishermen from Praslin |
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**Technology and Innovation**

**Commitment 4: Creation of an E-Engagement portal to increase citizen responsiveness**

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| Commitment Template |
|  Creation of an E-Engagement portal to increase citizen responsiveness |
| August 2019 – June 2021 |
| New commitment |
| Lead implementing agency/actor | Department of Information Communication Technology (DICT) |
| **Commitment description** |
| What is the public problem that the commitment will address? | In order to submit a concern to relevant authorities, one has to go through a series of bureaucratic procedures before it can finally reach a high-level official. The time lapse and undue intervention often creates discouragement and a feeling of helplessness among the public. Currently, there exists a Government website (E-gov) which provides links to all the ministries and departments. Also, most of the Government sectors have a dedicated website on which information can be shared and queries taken up via email/ dialogue boxes. However, despite the existence of these features, public concerns are rarely addressed and this render citizens frustrated and distrustful of Government institutions. Given the current situation, the public have turned to social media platforms to air their concerns regarding deficiencies in service deliveries (both public and private), corruption, Government reforms, policies and legislative decisions, environmental pollution, social injustice, moral decline, effectiveness of the justice system, etc.The approach being taken by citizens does reach the attention of the Government, especially on matters that warrant a public outcry (or are sensational in nature), or where politicians get involve to pressure the Government. However, despite the fact that the right to freedom of expression is being exercised in absentia of restraints, the avenues currently being undertaken do not necessarily facilitate immediate action on the part of the Government as they are taking place in a setting which is informal. This is especially true for matters which involve change in legislature and policies. A concrete example which can be used in this case is that of the office of the Registrar of Associations. Incidents of malpractice/corruption occurring in the different federations/associations are being brought to social media and not to the Office of the Registrar. As per the law, the Registrar cannot act on the matter unless a formal complaint is brought to her attention in order to open an investigation. Also, for the purpose of data collection and statistics, information received from social media alone can come in an unstructured form (cannot be taken up/ translated by IT systems) which can affect its usability. Moreover, the data belongs to the respective social media platforms and often, feedback received through these media can only be accessed through public discussions. This implies that discussions (citizens’ concerns) taking place in private cannot be taken into account. In addition to that a lot of people are wary of commenting on social media for fear of discrimination/victimization.  |
| What is the commitment? | The Commitment entails the implementation of technology with relevance to public participation. Its main objectives include:* Providing citizens with a formal space to voice their opinions/ concerns on national issues.
* Giving citizens a participatory role in Government decision making.
* Making the Government more aware of the concerns of the citizens.
* Making citizens more aware of the work of the Government and rendering the Government more accountable towards the people.

It is expected that from this commitment there will be more of effective collaboration between Government, the parliament and civil society in the interest of the public and country as a whole.Embedded in the E-Engagement Portal will be a link to the online performance monitoring and evaluation dashboard of the Government. This online dashboard will provide a view of how every Government MDA involved in the implementation of RBM (Results Based Management) is performing against targets set and KPIs used. This will provide for a fully transparent view of how every MDA are performing with respect to their delivery and thereby a full view of how Government is performing in terms of the delivery of its operations. It will be a tool for tracking progress and supporting decision making. With this level of visibility of Government performance, the public should become more informed and participate more substantively in the national governance process. |
| How will the commitment contribute to solve the public problem? | The commitment will be implemented through multi sectoral collaboration/ consultation whereby the principal responsibility of ensuring the set-up and running of the platform will be done by the Department of Information Communication Technology (DICT). The platform for civil society (CEPS) can engage in a monitoring/ performance watch dog role to ensure that citizen concerns are not being neglected and that the space is not being misused to limit freedom of expression, as well as guarantee the anonymity and protection of the personal details of citizens who interact with the platform.First, consultation will have to take place between civil society and the relevant Government stakeholders. This will be followed by the set-up of a trial version of the platform to test its popularity/ ease of use with the public. Aggressive campaigns will be done through the media along with education of the public on the purpose of the platform and why public participation is so crucial. Success stories (if any) can be used and from there an assessment of the trial can be done prior to the actual set-up of the portal.An app can be developed in addition to the portal along with the use of toll free telecom and whatsapp group so as to attract and facilitate user participation. The portal will also have a system in place where information can be fed from social media platforms.The commitment will solve the public problem by providing the people with a platform where they will have the opportunity to participate in national decisions, surveys, elections and freely exercise their democratic rights and also have them taken up directly by the relevant Government agencies.Government practice may change by becoming more open and accepting of public opinions. It will also help improve service delivery in the public sector as well as enhance the performance of the communication and information officers present in every department. |
| Why is this commitment relevant to OGP values? | The commitment is relevant to transparency because it will enable frank online discussions and exchange of information. Moreover, there will be a link with the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) which acts as a data repository whereby information can be retrieved for the purpose of reference, research etc.The commitment is relevant to civic participation as it will be a platform made for the public. Moreover, through meetings, the public will have the chance to provide inputs on how they want the platform to function and how best it can be used as a tool for public service.The online stage will be a formal space where the Government can act on the issues brought forth by the public and also answer certain queries that the people may have. In this line, Government becomes accountable to the public. |
|  Additional information  |  The commitments in the NAP are in line with Seychelles’ Vision 2033 and the first National Development Strategy (NDS). Implementation of the Commitment will be monitored by the RBM Committee. |
| Milestone Activity with a verifiable deliverable  | Start Date: | End Date: |
| 1. Implementation of the e-engagement portal
2. Define project scope
3. Define Terms of Reference
4. Define and put in place internal procedure
5. Outsource system design and implementation
6. User Acceptance Testing
7. Setup the IT infrastructure
8. Media Sensitization Campaign

System Go Live | Q1 2020 | Q1 2021 |
| 1. Implementation of the Government Performance Visibility portal
2. Define project scope
3. Define Terms of Reference
4. Define and put in place internal procedure
5. System design and implementation
6. User Acceptance Testing
7. Setup the IT infrastructure
8. Media Sensitization Campaign

System Go Live | Q2 2020 | Q4 2021 |
| 1. 3. Implementation of the Case processing visibility
 |  Q1 2020 | Q4 2021 |
| **Budget** |
| SCR 1,000,000/year |
| **Contact Information** |
| Name of responsible person from implementing agency | Mr. Hendrick Andre |
| Title, Department | Director General for Information Technology Division |
| Email and Phone | dgit@ict.gov.sc, 4286638  |
| Other Actors Involved | State actors involved | National Bureau of Statistics  |
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| CSOs, private sector,multilaterals, working groups | CEPS  |
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**ANNEX I:**

MEMBERS OF THE SEYCHELLES NATIONAL ACTION PLAN (NAP) DRAFTING COMMITTEE

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Name | Institution |
| Anael Bodwell | SYAH |
| Andre Hendrick | Department of Information Communication Technology |
| Bertrand Belle | Vice President’s Office |
| Franca Sicobo | Department of Economic Planning |
| Jennifer Jasmin | Department of Economic Planning |
| John Richardson | Information Commission |
| Marie-Nella Azemia  | CEPS |
| May-Paul Marengo | MOFTIEP |
| Meryl Esparon | CEPS |
| Michel Pierre | CEPS |
| Rebecca Loustau Lalanne | Vice President’s Office |
| Rosa Morin | Department of Information |

**ANNEX II:**

PUBLIC CONSULTATION ATTENDANCE LIST – MEETING AT CEPS ON 25TH JULY 2019

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Name | Institution |
| Chantal Ellen | CEPS |
| Charles Zialor | Lasosiasyon Pou Latrankilite ek Respe |
| Claudette Albert | Entreprendre aux Feminins de l’ocean Indien |
| Franca Sicobo | Ministry of Finance |
| Jude Fred | CEPS |
| Justin Freminot | HIV/AIDS Support Organisation |
| Linda Philoe | Family Action Team of Mont Buxton |
| Marguerita Kilindo | Esther Dignity Campaign for Girls and Women Seychelles |
| Marie- Nella Azemia | CEPS |
| Marie-Therese Purvis | Sustainability for Seychelles (S4S) |
| Meryl Esparon | CEPS |
| Michel Pierre | CEPS |
| Nirmal Jivan Shah | Nature Seychelles |
| Noela Gonthier | CARE |
| Rita Servina-Warren | Centre D’acceuil de la Rosiere |
| Tony Joubert | Bling Bling |
| Urethina Dufresne | Survival Ark Foundation |