



Open Government Partnership Independent Reporting Mechanism Seychelles: Comments Received 2019-2020 Design Report

Public Comment:

As a member of several CSOs, I have read the first half of the report and then skipped over much of the rest until the end part about recommendations, in particular noting the suggestions about making civil society more aware and participating more.

I do find this whole Open Government process to be very worthwhile and necessary for Seychelles but guessed when I first learnt about Seychelles joining the initiative, that getting CSOs and civil society individual members to participate actively would be difficult, partly because of the past political history of Seychelles and partly because it is still such a small sector in terms of formal structure. And while it is true that ways must be found to make people more aware of the Open Government process and to participate actively, I think this may be a slow and ongoing process which will simply take time as well as effort. The recent change of government and the subsequent change in attitude of many people may help to give them enough confidence and trust to participate more actively (although I suspect non-tech-savvy citizens may be reluctant!). And maybe it would be useful to bring in private sector workers more (as individual members of civil society rather than members of CSOs)?

However, my main point is that the Seychelles population is VERY SMALL by global standards (<100,000 - the equivalent of a medium sized town?), and yet Seychelles aims very high as a nation in terms of global commitments and participation in international processes, which is admirable but puts a great deal of pressure on government officials who are already required to fulfill many roles and 'wear many hats'. And the voluntary and civil sector is even smaller partly because most people are working, have families and find it difficult to find time to do much voluntary work. Also funding is hard to come by for many organisations, so paid workers in CSOs are rare, and voluntary contributions to important national processes often have to be carried out during working hours (which is impossible for many workers). People are not going to read through long project documents during their relaxation or family or home-keeping time unless they are really interested in a particular project, particularly if they already spend all day doing office work. I just think that international organisations do not quite realise how small the population is (i.e. trying to run a whole country with the population of a town!)

I am not saying that people will not participate if given the appropriate opportunity, but the information process and providing comments and suggestions has to be made very short and simple, maybe more informal? This is very much a personal view. I am now retired and the only reason I read even part of this Report is because I am interested and now have more time!