



## Seychelles MSP - Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

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### ***What is the Seychelles MSP (SMSP) initiative?***

The Seychelles Marine Spatial Plan (SMSP) Initiative is a government-led public process to achieve a vision for the sustainable and long-term use and health of Seychelles’ waters. A multi-sector and participatory approach is being used to develop a marine spatial plan that integrates goals for expanding marine protection, addressing climate change adaptation, and supporting the Blue Economy Roadmap and other national strategies. The planning process relies on input and participation from all the major sectors using or valuing the marine environment including fisheries, tourism, biodiversity conservation, renewable energy, port authority, maritime safety, and non-renewable resources. This is the first comprehensive marine plan for Seychelles’ waters and is a really important step for improving ocean management for everyone’s benefit. After Norway, it will be the second largest area for a marine spatial plan in the world and is the first comprehensive large-scale MSP in the Western Indian Ocean.



The Seychelles MSP began in February 2014 and will be completed by December 2020. The process uses integrated, multi-sector engagement within an ecosystem-based framework to improve ocean management in Seychelles and address three main objectives: expand marine protected areas to 30 percent of the EEZ and Territorial Sea; to develop the Blue Economy; and to address climate change adaptation.

### ***What is the definition of Marine Spatial Planning (MSP)?***

The most widely accepted definition of MSP comes from the IOC – UNESCO in 2009: “Marine spatial planning (MSP) is a process of analyzing and allocating parts of three-dimensional marine spaces (or ecosystems) to specific uses or objectives, to achieve ecological, economic, and social objectives that are usually specified through a political process”.

### ***What is the definition of Marine Protected Area (MPA)?***

Seychelles has adopted the definition from the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and is defined in the Seychelles Protected Area Policy as “a clearly defined geographical space, recognized, dedicated and managed, through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long-term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values”.

### ***What is the difference between MSP and MPA Network?***

The marine spatial plan will guide all activities that take place within Seychelles’ 1.4 million sq. km territory. Under the MSP, 30% of that territory - a total area of 410,000 sq. km - will be designated for marine protections. The marine protection and sustainable use areas will have conditions and restrictions on the human activities that are allowed there, if at all. These conditions - decided after significant consultation in the case of the Seychelles’ Marine Spatial Plan - are designed to protect areas of significant biodiversity. Economic activities are examined for each marine protected area for compatibility with the objective for protection. Both MSP and MPA Networks are developed from best available data and use consultations with stakeholders. Usually an MSP is for multiple objectives – ecological, economic, social and cultural – and MPA Networks are usually for one objective – ecological – but with multiple considerations (social, economic, cultural). An MPA network process usually has a goal to identify new MPAs towards a certain percentage goal or target and there is on-going debate in the scientific and conservation community about what ‘counts’ as a marine protected area. An MSP process may or may not have a biodiversity protection goal by area and may more broadly consider the context of marine protections within a framework of overall improved ocean management.

### ***What is the purpose of the SMSP?***

The Seychelles MSP will provide the government with direction on what and where existing and future activities are allowed, and the same information is provided for the marine sectors. The purpose of the MSP is framed within the context of expanding marine protection in Seychelles, the Blue Economy and climate change adaptation. The MSP process supports the Government’s climate change agenda, economic growth agenda, the Blue Economy Roadmap and national Sustainable Development Strategy. The government needs to embark on MSP to facilitate the improved management of the ocean for today and future generations.

The MSP has three goals:

1. Expand marine protections to 30% of Seychelles’ waters including 15% in high protection status
2. Address climate change adaptation
3. Support the Blue Economy Roadmap



### ***What are some expected benefits of the SMSP?***

- High ocean protection status will improve visitor experience and enjoyment
- Sustainable use zones will secure long-term access for artisanal fisheries
- Updated maritime zone boundaries for territorial sea waters
- Increase business certainty with new zones for domestic economic development
- Improved management of pelagic ecosystems will increase catch rates or value for fisheries.
- First-ever Seychelles ocean atlas for education, research, conservation and decision-making.
- Participatory and transparent stakeholder consultation framework for future decisions.
- Updated mandate to monitor and enforce marine activities to the 200 nautical mile border.
- Support SeyCCAT Blue Grants program for conservation, community and climate change projects.
- Strategies for climate change adaptation and long-term protection of key ecosystems.
- Meet and exceed voluntary commitments to CBD and UN SDG 14 goals

### ***What role does the government play in the SMSP?***

The Government of Seychelles is the authority for the Seychelles MSP Initiative and their role is to lead the marine spatial planning process including the implementation plan. In Seychelles, there is one level of government and it is at the national level. The Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change (MEECC) are the lead Ministry responsible for the MSP and they are supported by the MSP Executive Committee which has representation from all the Ministries and Parastatal Agencies related to the marine sectors in Seychelles including tourism, ports, fisheries, Blue Economy, national parks. The role of the government is to create an enabling framework for decisions through an iterative and participatory process to ensure that stakeholders have input and are in support of decisions. The framework is inclusive, adaptable and is supported by best available science and global best practices. Seychelles joins more than 20 other countries around the world that are undertaking marine spatial planning in their sovereign waters. Seychelles is playing a key role in the evolution of MSP globally because of being among the first nations to include climate change and the Blue Economy in the MSP goals and is providing leadership for Small Island Developing States (SIDS) for innovation in ocean management and financing.

### ***How does the SMSP link with the Debt Swap and SeyCCAT?***

The MSP Initiative is a component of the government-led, award-winning<sup>1, 2</sup> Debt-for-Climate-Change-Adaptation swap. Another component is the creation of a Seychelles Conservation & Climate Adaptation Trust ([SeyCCAT](#)), a trust that was operationalised in November 2016 to fund climate change adaptation and conservation projects in Seychelles. SeyCCAT will also provide partial funding to implement the marine spatial plan. The MSP will address the climate change adaptation goal and objectives in Phase 2 and objectives are being identified or developed to align with Seychelles' national strategies and international commitments on climate change.

1 - [2016 FT/IFC Transformational Business Award](#) for Achievement in Transformational Finance

2- 2016 Boat International Ocean Awards, Innovation

### ***Who is funding and leading the SMSP?***

The MSP Initiative is funded by the Government of Seychelles, grants to The Nature Conservancy (TNC), and grants from GOS-UNDP-GEF Programme Coordination Unit (PCU). The Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change (MEECC) is leading the MSP Initiative in Seychelles. The Nature Conservancy (TNC) is facilitating the process including process design, data compilation, scientific analysis, stakeholder engagement, planning outputs, communications, implementation and integration with other related projects. The development of the marine spatial plan is also facilitated by a partnership between The



Nature Conservancy and the GOS-UNDP-GEF Programme Coordination Unit (PCU).

### ***Why was TNC chosen to facilitate the SMSP process?***

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) has been engaged in marine spatial planning for more than ten years and has more than three decades of experience in designing and evaluating effectiveness of marine protected area networks. TNC staff have experience in planning, facilitation, spatial data catalogues and online data viewers, conservation prioritization analyses, development by design, decision-support tools, stakeholder engagement, marine policy, fisheries and other aspects of a marine spatial planning process. TNC staff support MSP in more than 34 nations including in Canada, United States, Caribbean, Indonesia, Mexico, Palau, Australia and Seychelles. TNC staff regularly publish in peer-reviewed journals and work with international organisations like IOC-UNESCO and UNEP to share lessons learned and best practices.

### ***What are the outputs of the SMSP?***

There are 10 main outputs of the marine spatial plan. Phase 1 laid the foundation for planning by organizing the process and developing planning tools. A coarse scale zoning design was completed in Feb 2018. Phase 2 will refine and complete the zoning design for the planning goals, as well complete legal and policy instruments to support implementation of the marine spatial plan.

1. Goals and Objectives
2. Governance Framework
3. Zoning Framework
4. Planning tools: data catalogue, MSP Atlas, Decision-Support Tools
5. Communications materials
6. Marine Spatial Plan
7. Draft Management Plans
8. MSP Policy
9. MSP Implementation Plan and Budget
10. MSP Governance Arrangements

### ***Who are the stakeholders and why are they important?***

In Seychelles, the SMSP is a comprehensive planning process to balance ecological, economic and social objectives thus the stakeholder list is comprehensive also. The marine stakeholders are all of the marine sectors including tourism, fishing, maritime security, recreation, conservation, renewable energy, petroleum, shipping and transportation, and coastal development. The stakeholders are also the Seychelles public or civil society. The SMSP holds public workshops and public information sessions so that Seychellois can learn more about the plan and provide their comments and information.

Stakeholder participation is important so that everyone's points of view are heard and included in developing the plan. In Phase 1 of the SMSP, the process hosted 34 workshops or meeting and 60 additional 1:1 consultations with more than 100 stakeholders to develop, review and approve SMSP outputs. The stakeholder participation and public engagement is key for marine spatial planning and cannot be done without it.

### ***What is the geographic scale and scope?***

The geographic scope is the entire 1,374,000 km<sup>2</sup> of the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and Territorial Sea. The Territorial Sea is 12 nm from the archipelagic baseline and the Exclusive Economic Zone is from the 12 to 200 nm. These jurisdictional boundaries are defined by United Nations Convention for the Law of the



Sea, or UNCLOS. The high seas and the Seychelles-Mauritius Joint Management Area are out of scope. The geographic scale is at both coarse and fine scale with planning units at 1 km<sup>2</sup> in shallow waters less than 200 m and 50 km<sup>2</sup> in waters greater than 200 m depth.

### ***What is the planning scope?***

The scope of planning is focused on five themes and includes activities within the Seychelles EEZ boundary. Out of scope is land-based activities and land-based sources of pollution plus the Seychelles-Mauritius Joint Management Area outside the Seychelles EEZ. Nevertheless, to the extent that pollution and land-based activities affect the marine environment, they will be considered in the siting for new marine protections such that adverse effects from terrestrial activities do not compromise objectives for any new MPAs. For the Joint Management Area, the planning considers the benefits and impacts of zoning in relation to this area and the implications for conservation and economic development in the future.

MSP Sector Themes:

1. Fisheries
2. Biodiversity Conservation
3. Infrastructure and Public Utilities
4. Non-renewable Resources: petroleum, mining
5. Tourism and Recreation

### ***What is the difference between Phase 1 and 2?***

Planning in Phase 1 was done at a coarse scale and primarily in deep waters to expand marine protections to 15% to identify new marine protection zones for first goal of the debt swap - 15 percent of the EEZ, approx. 200,000 sq. km. Phase 1 of the MSP Initiative was from 2014-2018. Phase 1 expanded protection for an existing MPA at Aldabra Special Reserve and for sustainable uses on the Mahe Plateau and surrounding waters. The SMSP process was organised in Phase 1 and decision-making frameworks were developed, stakeholder engagement was organised, and the first iteration of planning tools were created including spatial database and prototype for a SMSP Atlas. Phase 1 also saw the development of Allowable Activity Tables for the new marine protection areas, General and Area-based Management Considerations, and zoning maps. Phase 1 planning did not include planning for the waters inside the Territorial Sea, or 12 nautical miles, except for Aldabra and Assumption. Phase 2 will identify the remaining marine protection and sustainable use zones in both deep and shallow waters to meet the planning objectives, plus multiple use zones. Phase 2 will address climate change adaptation objectives, and include a completed implementation plan. Phase 2 may include revisions of zones identified in Phase 1.

### ***Are meeting documents available online?***

Agenda and meeting reports for the MSP Steering Committee, Technical Working Groups and Public Workshops are available on the Seychelles MSP website or by contacting the SMSP Office in Seychelles.

### ***What are the zones and what activities will be allowed?***

The SMSP Zoning Framework has three zones: 1 – High Biodiversity Protection; 2 – Medium Biodiversity Protection and Sustainable Use; and 3 – Multiple Use. Existing uses were mapped in 2014-2015 and are used to inform proposals for new marine protection areas. Discussions with marine stakeholders tell the MSP where their high value areas are in the ocean and what areas are important. The three zone categories are different and the framework provides the direction to meet the 30% goal for species and habitat representation with half of this in high protection or “no take” status. Each area in the zoning



design will have an objective, rationale and associated Activity Table and Management Considerations. The Allowable Activity Tables are developed using stakeholder committees and working groups and describe what activities are allowed plus any considerations and restrictions.

### ***Why is oil & gas allowed in a “marine protected area”?***

The Seychelles MSP is a public process of analysing and allocating space for human activities to achieve ecological, economic and social objectives. The process started in 2014, will be completed in 2020 and implemented in 2021. The MSP process is using an objective-based approach for marine protections and identifying allowable activities based on these objectives. The MSP is working with government institutions and other stakeholders to create a framework for development so it's done in the right way and in the right places.

In reference to the area that was designated a Zone 2 – Medium Biodiversity and Sustainable Use category in Phase 1, *the objective of this zone is to expand marine protection for marine biodiversity, benthic habitats and the important upwelling ecosystem that occurs in these waters of Seychelles, and to improve sustainable management of compatible uses in this zone.* The Zone 2 category is brand new in Seychelles and supporting legislation is still being developed as are the regulations. In this zone, oil exploration, fishing, tourism among other economic activities are allowed under certain conditions.

In 1984 the Seychelles Government established a national oil company to strengthen its capabilities to deal with exploration and other activities related to the development of the petroleum potential of the State. Exploration activities are undertaken with best global practices and must comply with all applicable laws and regulations in regards to the environment.

Geophysical surveys are conditionally allowable in Zone 1 areas in order to conduct geological research throughout Seychelles' EEZ to determine composition of the sea bed and support boundary determination for the EEZ and collect data on benthic geomorphology.

### ***How were the Phase 1 areas designated?***

The SMSP Initiative received support from the stakeholders to proceed with the proposed marine protection areas for Phase 1 and this was brought to the MSP Executive Committee for decision to take to Cabinet to proceed with the nomination package. Once approval was received and as per the process for the National Park and Nature Conservancy Act (NPNCA) a nomination package for the Phase 1 MSP marine protection areas was prepared and submitted to the Minister of Environment, Energy and Climate Change. The Director General for MEECC submitted the nomination package to the Attorney General's Office to review for completeness and a public comment period was open for 48 days. The nomination package was available for public viewing at MEECC offices on Mahe and Praslin and could be downloaded from the SMSP website. Once the comment period closed and all comments were addressed, the Minister Environment, Energy and Climate Change signed the notice to gazette and this went to the Attorney General's Office. The Phase 1 Marine Areas were officially gazetted on 21 Feb 2018.

### ***How will the zones be managed?***

The MSP Initiative will integrate with existing policy, legislation and regulations wherever possible. Fisheries management in the SMSP is being discussed with Seychelles Fishing Authority and existing and new SFA regulations will apply to the MSP areas. For example, the Demersal Fishery Management Plan for the Mahe Plateau will apply to fishing activities and the directions in this plan are supporting the Zone 2 category designation. Similarly for monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS), the MSP is consulting with



the Seychelles Maritime Safety Administration and has formed a Maritime Safety Technical Working Group. For a list of all Technical Working Groups, [click here](#).

### ***Who will implement the SMSP and how much will it cost?***

The options and costs for the governance arrangements (existing or new) are being examined through a consultancy in 2018-2019 as well as the costs to implement the zoning design itself. This research is expected to take at least 6 months and results will be presented to the MSP Executive and Steering Committees. Because the SMSP is ongoing through 2020, the zones and allowable activities not yet decided and finalized and implementation priorities not determined. Thus, the costs and options at this stage are informed by drafts and proposals and are being estimated or informed in some cases by similar costing projects in Seychelles (e.g., GOS-UNDP-GEF Protected Areas Finance and BioFIN). The “who” and “how much” are really important questions for a successful marine spatial plan and as with other elements of the process design, the SMSP is following best practices and having the conversations about implementation early, before the planning is completed.

### ***What are the options for monitoring and enforcement in the Outer Islands?***

Seychelles contains 115 islands and is a vast archipelago encompassing 1.35 million square kilometers and a distance of more than 1,000 km between islands. New marine protection zones covering 30% of Seychelles’ Exclusive Economic Zone are being identified using a public and participatory marine spatial planning process and will cover 400,000 sq. km. The Seychelles Marine Spatial Plan Initiative is a government-led process to achieve multiple objectives including expanding marine protection, addressing climate change, and advancing the Blue Economy. It is important to improve maritime security to reduce threats at sea including illegal fishing, piracy, and overfishing as well as monitor and enforce allowable activities. Infrastructure and capacity are expanding on Mahé and this will complement infrastructure throughout the Outer Islands. Any new terrestrial development will require permits and approval from the Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change including environmental impact assessments. Assomption Island, for example, is a key location for monitoring vessel activity for these waters as it is in the far western region of the archipelago, has an airstrip, and has had military operations for several decades including an active radar station. For the Marine Spatial Plan to be successfully implemented, monitoring and enforcement is very important especially in the Outer Islands.

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- Infrastructure and capacity are expanding on Mahé and this will complement infrastructure throughout the Outer Islands.
- Assomption Island, for example, is a key location for monitoring vessel activity for these waters as it is in the far western region of the archipelago, has an airstrip, and has active border and security operations including radar and customs clearance.



***Where can I obtain more information?***

Please contact us for more information.

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