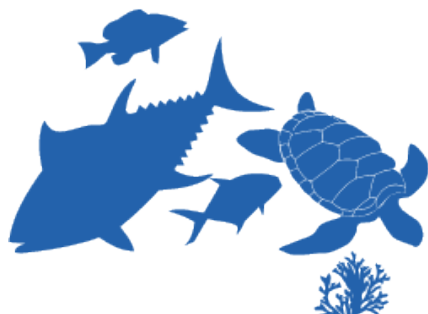


THE SEYCHELLES' MARINE SPATIAL PLAN

On the leading edge of **marine conservation & climate change**

The Republic of Seychelles is an archipelago of 115 islands within a rich tropical marine ecosystem in the Western Indian Ocean. Seychelles is a 'large ocean state' with an Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of 1.35 million km² and land area of only 455 km². The islands have high rates of species endemism and their global importance for biodiversity is highlighted by two UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Surrounding the islands and atolls, Seychelles' ocean contains many species and different habitats from tiny corals to huge seamounts and underwater canyons. Marine tourism, fisheries and all aspects of the Blue Economy are vitally important, and Seychelles is an important regional and global trade partner through shipping and port facilities.

BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION



CLIMATE CHANGE



BLUE ECONOMY



THE SEYCHELLES MSP INITIATIVE

The Seychelles Marine Spatial Plan (SMSP) began in February 2014 and builds upon existing marine protection and planning efforts in Seychelles. The SMSP is a government-led process using a participatory, integrated, and multi-sector approach to support the health and sustainable long-term use of the Seychelles' ocean waters. The Ministry of Agriculture, Climate Change and Environment (MACCE) is the government lead for the SMSP with facilitation, project management and development of the marine spatial plan by The Nature Conservancy (TNC). More than 11 marine sectors and civil society participate in the SMSP including fishing, tourism, marine charters, biodiversity conservation, renewable and non-renewable energy, port authority and maritime safety.

The SMSP is a necessary output of the Seychelles debt conversion in which the Government committed to expanding

marine biodiversity protection to 30% of the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and Territorial Sea by 2020. The debt conversion is a partnership between the Government of Seychelles and The Nature Conservancy and was signed in 2016 - the world's first ocean debt conversion. The Seychelles Conservation and Climate Adaptation Trust (SeyCCAT) was established from the \$21.6M debt conversion and supports marine conservation and climate adaptation activities as well as the SMSP.

The SMSP has three main objectives: expand marine protection to 30% of the EEZ, address climate change adaptation and support the Blue Economy. The SMSP is for the entire 1.35 million km² of Seychelles' ocean and is the first comprehensive MSP in the Western Indian Ocean. The SMSP is aligned and integrates with national legislation, regulations, and policies as well as international obligations and commitments and numerous local projects and initiatives. It supports the Government commitment to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity and the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Seychelles' Blue Economy is integral to the sustainable development goals and to reach climate change and ocean protection targets.

The SMSP has an Executive Committee, Steering Committee and seven Technical Working Groups. Stakeholders developed Guiding Principles for the SMSP in 2014-2015 and decision-support tools have supported an evidence-based approach to the zoning and plan development. The SMSP Initiative is following global best practices, will include a schedule for revisions, and propose indicators to monitor and evaluate implementation success.



ABOUT SEYCHELLES MSP

The Seychelles Marine Spatial Plan is a public process to ensure species and habitats have long-term protection, improve resiliency of marine ecosystems with a changing climate, and provide for sustainable economic development for fisheries, tourism and other marine sectors.

BENEFITS

Ocean Awareness

The SMSP gathers and compiles knowledge, information and data including local data sets and participatory mapping for species, habitats and human uses. The data catalogue and SMSP Atlas benefits other coastal and ocean plan efforts, development decisions, and marine management within the EEZ.

Integrated Management

The SMSP zones include maps, Allowable Activity Tables and management considerations. The marine spatial plan will be implemented using national policies and regulations and an interim option using the Environmental Protection Act. Implementation will be lead by MACCE with integration of all key Ministries.

Stakeholder Participation

A transparent, participatory process using global best practice is critical for a robust marine spatial plan. It is crucial that everyone’s points of view are considered in the SMSP. Since 2014, the SMSP has engaged more than 150 stakeholders and civil society in at least 250 meetings,

consultations and workshops – the largest participatory process in Seychelles to date.

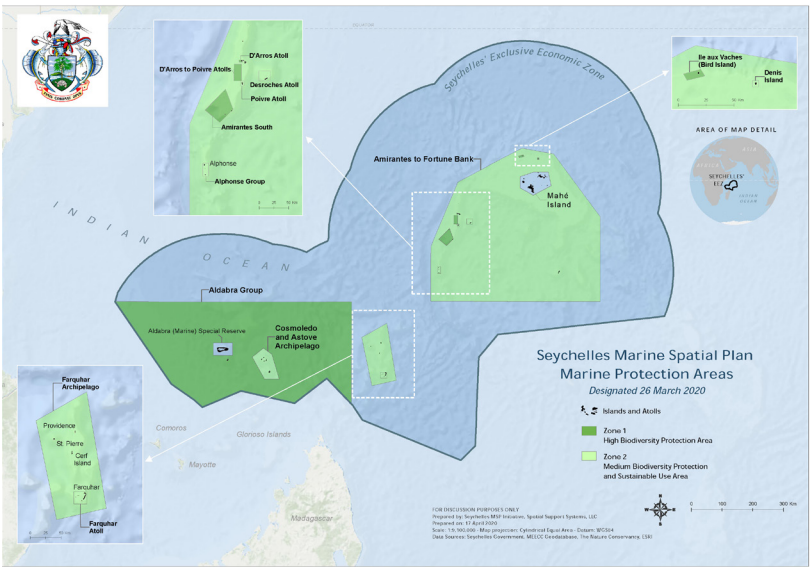
Sustainable Financing

Long-term financing is needed to support implementation of the SMSP and conservation activities. Funding has been secured through 2025 and additional funding needs are being examined now and through implementation. The SMSP activities are funded by the Government of Seychelles and TNC, with additional funding from World Bank SWIOFish3, Oceans5, Waitt Foundation, Blue Nature Alliance, and others.

Transparent Decision-Making

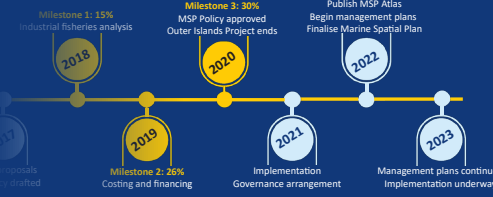
Certainty and confidence are important for financing and investing in biodiversity protections and sustainable economic development in Seychelles. The SMSP science-based approach coupled with a transparent decision-making framework ensures that data, inclusivity, transparency and equity guides decisions for the Seychelles Marine Spatial Plan.

SEYCHELLES MSP ZONING



In March 2020, an official government announcement was made to legally designate more than 410,000 km² as Marine Protection Areas after more than 250 workshops, meetings and workshops with more than 150 stakeholders. Five ‘High Biodiversity Protection’ Zones cover 203,235 km² and eight ‘Medium Biodiversity Protection and Sustainable Use’ Zones cover 217,589 km². The 13 marine protection areas contain key areas for tuna, seagrass beds, and corals. The protection areas are home to endangered species and economically vital fish stocks and include climate change refugia as well as important foraging areas. The remaining ocean areas are in a ‘Multiple Use’ Zone category, covering nearly 70% of the Seychelles. For all areas, the SMSP is working with stakeholders to identify allowable activities and management considerations. The SMSP has also contributed to Seychelles’ Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) and developed methodology for climate-change risk mapping for coral reefs.

WHAT’S NEXT?



The completion of the Seychelles Marine Spatial Plan for the full EEZ is scheduled for 2022 and for implementation to be underway in 2023. By 2025, the SMSP will have management plans approved for all zone areas, will have a monitoring program to report on effective management of Marine Protection Areas, and will be playing an important role to integrate and coordinate marine uses and activities in Seychelles for the long-term health of Seychelles’ marine ecosystem and economic sectors.

For more information or to become involved in the Seychelles MSP, please visit www.seymsp.com or write: info@seymsp.com

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