

MARINE SPATIAL PLAN

The Ministry for Agriculture, Climate Change and Environment (MACCE) is the lead for the Seychelles Marine Spatial Plan (SMSP) process, with the Ministry for Fisheries & Blue Economy (MFBE) as the SMSP Executive Committee Co-Chair.

Consultations. In-person stakeholder workshops resumed in Apr 2022 with an information session and consultations in Jul and Nov 2022 to finalise the SMSP. The workshops focused on the zoning documents and to continue preparations for implementation in 2023.

Briefings. The SMSP briefed the members of Cabinet on the SMSP on 16 Nov 2022 - Cabinet Business - State House

Related Workshops. Engagement with on-going, related projects included WIO Blue Economy Project, FishPath training, Pew Seagrass, Oceans5 Management Plan Templates, SWIOFISH3 Management Plan, and SFA Fisheries Act.

Implementation Governance. An interim option for SMSP implementation was approved by Cabinet on 11 Aug 2021 to use the Environmental Protection Act (EPA), under MACCE. An amendment to the EPA will ensure inter-Ministerial and cross-sectoral communication and coordination as per the Guiding Principles identified in 2018-2019 for the Seychelles Ocean Authority. A consultancy is underway to develop an operational framework by Dec 2022.

Regulations. The Nature Reserves and Conservancy (NRC) Act passed with unanimous approval by the National Assembly in 2022. Under the NRC Act, Zone 2 gazetted areas will be re-designated as a 'Sustainable Use' category pending approval of relevant regulations; Zone 1 areas will remain in the (Marine) National Park category. The drafting of regulations by MACCE has commenced.

SMSP Coordination. SMSP team meets monthly with the Executive Committee to provide updates and discuss the workplan and action items. This is an optional meeting for EC members and in addition to the EC meetings where decisions are made in support of advancing the SMSP.

Marine Spatial Plan. Drafting of the Plan is underway and will include stakeholder and public review in Q1 2023.

SMART Objectives. The SMART objective for the Blue Economy was finalised and endorsed by the EC in July 2022: "Develop Allowable Activities Tables with sustainability criteria for MSP Zones by 2022 to support the Blue Economy Agenda throughout the Seychelles' coastal and the marine environments".

Communications. A consultancy to support the SMSP team began in Jan 2022 and is updating the SMSP materials, public outreach, and other communications. The SMSP website was updated this year with a new Home page and additional pages for outputs as they are finalised. Check the SMSP website for updates.

Student Projects and Mentoring. The SMSP team continues to assist students and other researchers with information and requests including from the University of Seychelles.

FROM ZONING TO IMPLEMENTATION

The SMSP marine protection areas were legally gazetted in March 2020 and the process is moving towards a legally enforceable Plan, with implementation to begin in 2023. The Seychelles Conservation and Climate Adaptation Trust (SeyCCAT) supports the SMSP to administer grants and coordinate activities with related projects. SeyCCAT supports sustainable financing for implementation of the SMSP.

Funding and Sustainable Financing. More than US\$4.7M in grants are secured from The Nature Conservancy (TNC), Blue Nature Alliance (BNA), Oceans5 (O5), Waitt Foundation and other funders for 2022-2024. A consultancy to explore additional funding for implementation will begin in 2023.

Management Plan and Templates. Management plans are needed for all 13 SMSP areas. Management plans for four areas were prepared in the GoS-UNDP-GEF Outer Islands Project in 2019 - Poivre, Desroches, Alphonse, and Farquhar and are due for review in 2023. A consultancy in Jan 2022 has developed management plan templates to pilot for D'Arros Atoll Marine National Park (Zone 1), and St Joseph (within Amirantes to Fortune Bank Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (Zone 2) and

Denis Island (Zone 2). This consultancy includes other protections led by other entities: Aldabra Special Reserve (Seychelles Island Foundation, SIF) and Temporal Protected Areas (Marine Conservation Society Seychelles, MCSS). Another consultancy began in 2022 to develop management plans for three Zone 2 areas; Amirantes to Fortune Bank, Farquhar Archipelago and Cosmoledo and Astove sustainable use areas, a SWIOFish3 programme project. Stakeholder consultations were held in Nov/Dec 2022 and will take place in early 2023. The SMSP will assess the management plan needs for remaining areas, with funds available under the BNA project for remaining zone 1 areas. All SMSP management plans will be developed with stakeholder participation and review.

Business Plans. Two MPA sites have been selected for development of Business Plans (Waite/Starling resources) in 2022, namely Denis Island and Aldabra Special Reserve.

Review of SeyCCAT Act. The SeyCCAT Act was amended and approved 20 Jul 2022 to allow proceeds from the Seychelles debt conversion to be used to support the administration of SeyCCAT and finance SMSP activities including the long-term management of the marine protection area network. This planned activity stems from lessons learned over the past five years since the establishment of the trust.

Legal review for implementation. AE Law and Waite Institute (Waite Foundation) are supporting the SMSP for a legal review and legal roadmap for implementation. The report will be ready in early 2023 for sharing after review by SMSP committees.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate Change Risk Mapping. The Climate Change Risk Mapping report will be ready in early 2023 and posted on the SMSP website. A presentation was made at the 12th WIOMSA Scientific Symposium, and can be found on the SMSP website. A key output with the report is a Sea Surface Temperature (SST) database from 2002 to present. Work is underway to create a shareable format for files that are 100s of gigabytes. Stay tuned!

BLUE ECONOMY

Territorial Sea. The Department of Blue Economy travelled to the UK Hydrographic Office in May 2022 to finalise Seychelles' basepoints for the UNCLOS maritime boundaries. These basepoints create Seychelles' Territorial Sea, Contiguous Zone, and Exclusive Economic Zone. Cabinet approved the official boundaries for Seychelles on Wed 8 June 2022; a significant milestone for the MSP and Seychelles for Seychelles' jurisdictional rights of its maritime/marine waters. The Statutory Instruments (SI) were Gazetted 29 Jul 2022 under the Maritime Zones, Act 1999 by the President of Seychelles.

Sustainable Fishing. The SMSP team continues to work with the Seychelles Fishing Authority (SFA), the MFBE, and TNC Large-scale Fisheries Team on sustainable fisheries. Funding and program support for an Electronic Monitoring System (EMS) pilot on Industrial Fisheries vessels is ongoing.

FishPath. Meetings were held with the FishPath team (SFA, TNC & CSIRO) to prioritise harvest strategies and priority fisheries to pilot the FishPath tool. The Seychelles **Spanner Crab** fishery was prioritised to pilot the FishPath Tool. TNC and SFA with CSIRO delivered 2 in person trainings in 2022. A 4-day Fishpath training was held in August and a statistics training using R was carried out in September.

SCIENCE and RESEARCH

Ecosystem Goods and Services. The final report and maps are on the SMSP website and TNC's Mapping Ocean Wealth Hub.

COORDINATION and INFORMATION SHARING

National Coordination. The SMSP PM sits on multiple Steering Committees (SC) and Working Groups (WG) to assist with synergies, coordination, and information sharing for the SMSP including:

- *Adaptation Fund coral restoration project*
- *GEF7 project formulation committee*
- *IKI Nature Seychelles project National WG*
- *SWIOFISH3 Programme SC*



- Regional technical WG for MSP
- SeyCCAT Blue Grants Committee
- Technical working groups for Blue Nature Alliance, Waitt Foundation and Oceans 5 grants

Regional MSP. The SMSP PM is one of the two Seychelles' representatives on the *Regional Technical Working Group for Marine Spatial Planning* for the Western Indian Ocean, where a regional MSP strategy is being developed. The SMSP and SeyCCAT provided input in the regional Western Indian Ocean Symphony tool a collaboration between the Nairobi Convention and the Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management (SwAM) for measuring cumulative environmental impact in the Western Indian Ocean.

Global MSP community. SMSP team has shared lessons learned around the world in 2022 including in the Caribbean, Canada, Palau, Tanzania, Kenya, and Mediterranean.

COMMUNICATIONS

Publications.

Frontiers in Marine Science e-book: Lombard et al., (2019) *Practical Approaches, and Advances in Spatial Tools to Achieve Multi-Objective Marine Spatial Planning*. *Front. Mar. Sci.* 29 March 2022. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fmars.2019.00166>

The Nature Conservancy (2022). *Evaluation of Ecosystem Goods and Services for Seychelles' Existing and Proposed Protected Area System*. Unpublished report to Government of Seychelles – MACCE and SWIOFish3 programme. 78 pages. SMSP website – Mapping Ocean Wealth

Conferences and Workshops.

- Ocean Race Summit Seychelles – Mar 2022. YouTube link
- 12th WIOMSA Scientific Symposium. SMSP and SeyCCAT presented in 3 mini symposia and 2 sessions –15 Oct 2022.
- FishPath Training, Seychelles – 8 Aug 2022
- 3rd International MSP Conference, Spain. Dr. Smith co-authored State of the Oceans Reporting for Global MSP – Nov 2022.
- Law of the Sea Course: British Institute of International and Comparative Law - Dec 2022
- CBD EBSAs and Seychelles MSP for COP15, Montreal – 8 Dec 2022

Media Coverage.

- 16 March 2022. Africa's global biodiversity hotspot. BBC Travel - Africa's global biodiversity hotspot
- 20 April 2022. Seychelles' marine spatial plan being finalised with 3 zones of allowable activities. Seychelles News Agency
- 21 April 2022. Work stepped up to finalise Seychelles' marine spatial plan by December. Seychelles Nation - Finalise MSP
- 8 June 2022. Cabinet approved for the revision of Seychelles' baselines and Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). Cabinet Business - Wednesday 8th June 2022
- 20 July 2022. Cabinet approves SeyCCAT (amendment) Bill Cabinet Business - Wednesday 20 July 2022
- 22 July 2022. A definitive travel guide to the Seychelles. Travel & Leisure Magazine



**Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays and Happy New Year
2023 from the Seychelles Marine Spatial Plan!**

Thank you to all stakeholders for your participation and support!