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**ACCESS TO INFORMATION  
ANNUAL REPORT 2022**

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## 1 . INTRODUCTION

Fisheries is the second most important sector after tourism, fish and fisheries products are one of the most traded commodities in Seychelles and as such constitutes an important growth and foreign income generating activity for the economic, social and cultural aspects. Hence, in order to ensure the continuous good management of the resources, the Seychelles Fishing Authority (SFA), has a very important and active role for its management.

Created in August 1984 by the Seychelles Fishing Authority (Establishment) Act, the Seychelles Fishing Authority, act as the executive arm of the Government in the field of fishery with the aim to develop the fishing industry to its fullest potential and to safeguard the resource base for sustainable development. In January 2019, the Authority gained financial and administrative autonomy moving from a government budget-dependent entity to a Financial Autonomous State-Owned Enterprise.

The Authority is governed by a Board of Directors and the new Board was appointed by the President on 21<sup>st</sup> February 2021, chaired by Mr Radley Weber and seven Directors who are responsible for its policy, control and management over-sight. The Chief Executive Officer has the supervision over and directs the day-to-day affairs of the Authority. In September 2022, the SFA has seen changes in its top Management, upon the resignation of its Chief Executive Officer, Mr Nichol Elizabeth and Mr Philippe Michaud was appointed as the Interim Chief Executive Officer to date.

Currently SFA has eleven departments under its core and support functions to ensure that it delivers to the maximum on its mandate. The main programmes of SFA revolves around its core function of managing fisheries and provision of services to serve the fishing sector.

Its personnel consist of a team of highly qualified and experience staff with a dynamic set of skills and academic knowledge.

The SFA actively supports stakeholders' engagement and strives to maintain a good relationship with all parties involved, both locally and internationally. It works in close collaboration with the Ministry of Fisheries and the Blue Economy (MFBE), the Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change (MACCE), the Seychelles Coast Guard (SCG), Seychelles Maritim Safety Authority (SMSA), the Seychelles Ports Authority (SPA), Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC), other Government institutions, fishermen and boat owners' associations, local and international NGOs, universities, suppliers, development agencies and other partners.

### **Appointment of SFA's Information Officer**

As per requirement of the Access to Information Act 2018, with the aim to foster good governance through enhance transparency, accountability, integrity in public service and administration, the SFA appointed its First Information officer Mrs Selma Edmond and after her resignation, Mrs Veronica Barbé was appointed on 20<sup>th</sup> April 2021 to date.

## **2 . Mission and Vision and mandate of the SFA**

The vision of SFA is:

*Excellence in sustainable fisheries management and development*

The mission is :

*To ensure optimal utilization of the fisheries resources for the benefit of the Seychellois people through sustainable management, ecosystem-based approaches and integrated development.*

The core principles of the Authority aim to enable the Authority to implement its mandate in a manner which promotes good governance, transparency, participation and accountability and according to internationally recognized best practices in fisheries management.

### **Mandate of the SFA**

The functions of the SFA as provided for under Section 5 (a) of the SFA (Establishment) Act, 1984 and Section 4 are to :

- (a) to promote, organize and develop fishing, fishing industries and fishing resources in Seychelles;
- (b) to assist in the formulation of the national policy with respect to fishing, fishing industries and fishing resources and in the implementation of that policy;
- (c) to conduct negotiations, or engage in meetings, seminars or discussions, with regard to fishing or fisheries or the establishment or operation of fishing industries, whether at a national or international level, on behalf of the Republic or otherwise;
- (d) to identify the manpower training requirements of Seychelles with regard to fishing and fishing industries; and

Subject to the Act, the Authority has the power to do all things necessary or convenient in connection with, or incidental to, the performance of its functions, and these includes:

1. Own, lease or dispose of movables or immovables;
2. Own, operate and charter any vessel;
3. Form companies under the Companies Act;
4. Enter into partnership or joint ventures;
5. Act as an agent for the purpose of the management of any business or enterprise, or for any other purpose;
6. Hold shares in or debentures of any company;
7. Carry on any business or enterprise for or in connection with fishing or fisheries including; processing, transporting, handling, marketing, or distributing fish or fish products, exporting fish or fish products, and the sale of equipment or apparatus to be used for fishing, or any other matter relating to its functions where, in the opinion of the Authority, the carrying out of such a business or enterprise is in the best interest of the Republic;
8. Conduct surveillance operations, in conjunction with the Department of Defence, in relation to fishing operations in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) or in waters adjacent to the continental shelf;
9. Monitor the catch of all fishing vessels;
10. Carry out scientific and development research

The core principles of the Authority aims to enable the Authority to implement its mandate in a manner which promotes good governance, transparency, participation and accountability and according to internationally recognized best practices in fisheries management.

**Its core values are :**

To implement the SFA mandates in a manner which promotes good governance, transparency, participation and accountability and according to internationally recognized best practices in fisheries management as per below listed :

1. **Integrity & professionalism:** Work with highest level of professional ethics, responsibility and respect to gain the trust of our constituents.

2. **Adaptability:** Be proactive and flexible in our approaches and make use of best available science and technology to execute our duties in line with the social and economic priorities.
3. **Inclusiveness and teamwork:** Promote teamwork, engage our co-workers and stakeholders and valorize the diversity of our workforce and stakeholders while working towards common results.
4. **Leadership:** Consistently leading the way by empowering and developing staff to own and drive work programs.
5. **Stewardship:** Promote sustainable resource management and ecosystem-based approaches among all stakeholders.
6. **Equity:** Be fair and provide equal opportunity to present and future generations.

### 3. ANNUAL REPORT REQUIREMENTS

SR No	ATI ACT REQUIREMENTS	No
1)	The total number of ATI requests for access received;	1
2)	<u>TYPE OF INFORMATION</u>	
	The number of requests for personal information	0
	The number of request for public domain information	1
	The number of request for third party information	0
	The number of request for commercial and confidential Information	0
	The number of request for law enforcement information	0
	The number of request for privileged documents	0
	The number of request for protection of life and safety of an individual information	0
	The number of request for National Security and defence	0
	The number of request for International relations	0
	The number of request for Economic interest of the state	0
	The number of request for Academic or professional examination and recruitment process information	0
	The number of request for proposal submitted to Cabinet	0
3)	The number of requests for access granted in full;	1
4)	The number of requests for access refuse in full;	0
	The number of requests for access refuse in part;	0
5)	The number of times each provision of Part III ( <i>EXEMPTIONS</i> ) was relied on to refuse access in full;	0

	The number of times each provision of Part III ( <i>EXEMPTIONS</i> ) was relied on to refuse access in part;	0
6)	The number of cases in which the periods stipulated in section 11 were extended in terms of section 12;	0
7)	The number of review applications lodged with the head of the information holder;	0
8)	The number of reviews lodged on the ground that a request for access was regarded as having been refused in terms of section 14;	0
9)	The number of cases in which, as a result of a review, access was given to information;	0
10)	The number of request transferred to another Public Body	0
11)	The number of request abandoned after request	0
12)	The number of request but no records exist	0

*A description of the steps or efforts taken by the head of the body to encourage all officers of that body to comply with the provisions of this Act;*

Complying to the provisions of Access to Information Act is being regarded as very important for both the former head and moreover with the appointment of the current Interim CEO, Mr Phillippe Michaud is always insisting on good governance through enhancing transparency, accountability, integrity in all aspects of the Authority's daily obligations.

Being the Chairman of the National Multi-Stakeholders Group, the Fisheries Transparency Initiative (FITI) he has considerably enhanced the Seychelles' credibility as a responsible fishing nation, with the aim on focusing on improving the quality of information and fulfilment of regular reporting obligations for proper response to all fisheries related queries.

Today SFA has become more visible among the public. Moreover, the decision by the Management to recruit an Assistant Manager Public Relation and Communication has improved the authority's image whilst ensuring the provision for dissemination of accurate and real time information. Also, the recruitment of the Internal Auditor has impacted positively for good monitoring of accountability within the Authority.

*Any facts which indicate an effort by the body to administer and implement the spirit and intention of the Act according to its submitted plan;*

The Seychelles Fishing Authority Management has proven its full engagement in complying with the provision of the Act. During the year 2021 and 2022 we have seen great improvement in compilation and publication of reports such as the Annual Report, Audited Accounts, Financial Statement, Monthly Financial Report etc.. To mention the Annual Reports which the long-overdue backlog has been cleared and the latest publication for the year 2021 Annual Report was published in 2022. To note, the decision of the Board of Directors for setting up of different committees such as Accounts Committee and the Audit and Risk Committee have positively impacted for good compliance.

We could confirm at this day that all obligations as recommended by the Public Enterprise Monitoring (PEMC) are up to date.

Moreover, continuous efforts whereby the SFA is actively engaging is advertising its products: job offer, stakeholder's meetings and workshops, staff engagements and also constant revision of its website.

**I** Particulars of any penalties imposed against any person under this Act;  
YES  NO  (If yes, list down)

No penalties have been imposed against any person under this Act.

**III** Particulars of any disciplinary action taken against any person under this Act; YES  NO  (If yes, list down)

No disciplinary action has been taken against any person under this Act yet.

## 6. CHALLENGES

*Particulars of any difficulties encountered in the implementation of this Act in terms of the operation of the body, including issues of staffing and cost. This also should include the challenges you encounter as an Information Officer.*

Full engagement of all staff, from top management downwards remains a great challenge for complete implementation of this Act, due to the lack of awareness of the act itself. Once again I will insist of the possibility to offer atleast, all Managers to attend an educational awareness session in order to have a broader knowledge of the act, which can then be transmitted to respective staff members.

Also, another difficulty encountered for good implementation of the act is the provision for electronic filing systems which are yet to be materialised, in view that there is still a lack of active information since the fungus infestation. Efforts are underway to cater for same.

The SFA was once equipped with a well-managed Documentation Centre whereby various individuals could come to gather fisheries related information. Again, such loss during the fungus infestation has been detrimental. In view of the current development in the fisheries sector it is vital to revitalise such important source of records keeping whereby it could be actively available either electronically or hard copies.

## 7. RECOMMENDATIONS

*Recommendations for reform, or amendment of this Act, other legislation, or practice relevant to the optimal realisation of the objectives of this Act.*

Again, as suggested in the last report I would strongly recommend the need for awareness program within the concerned organisation for full engagement of all concerned for proper implementation of this act.

Also the need for electronic filing system and re-establishment of the Documentation Centre.

I hope that the above requests will be considered to enforce good knowledge of this important Act.

Finally, I wish to thank all staff of the Information Commission for their full engagement and supports provided throughout the year 2022.

1) **DECLARATION**

I declare that in accordance to Section 54 of the Access to Information, Act 2018, the Annual Report are to the best of my knowledge, true, accurate and complete as per the requirements.

*Veronica Rumbi*

Name of Information Officer

*Ver*

Signature

*30/03/2023*

Date

I confirm that this Annual Report is verified and true, accurate and complete to my knowledge as the Head of Information Holder of **Seychelles Fishing Authority** on the date stated below.

*Philippe Michaud*

Name of Head of Information Holder

*[Signature]*

Signature

Dated this *31<sup>st</sup>* ..... of *March* ....., 20*23*

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**OFFICIAL STAMP**