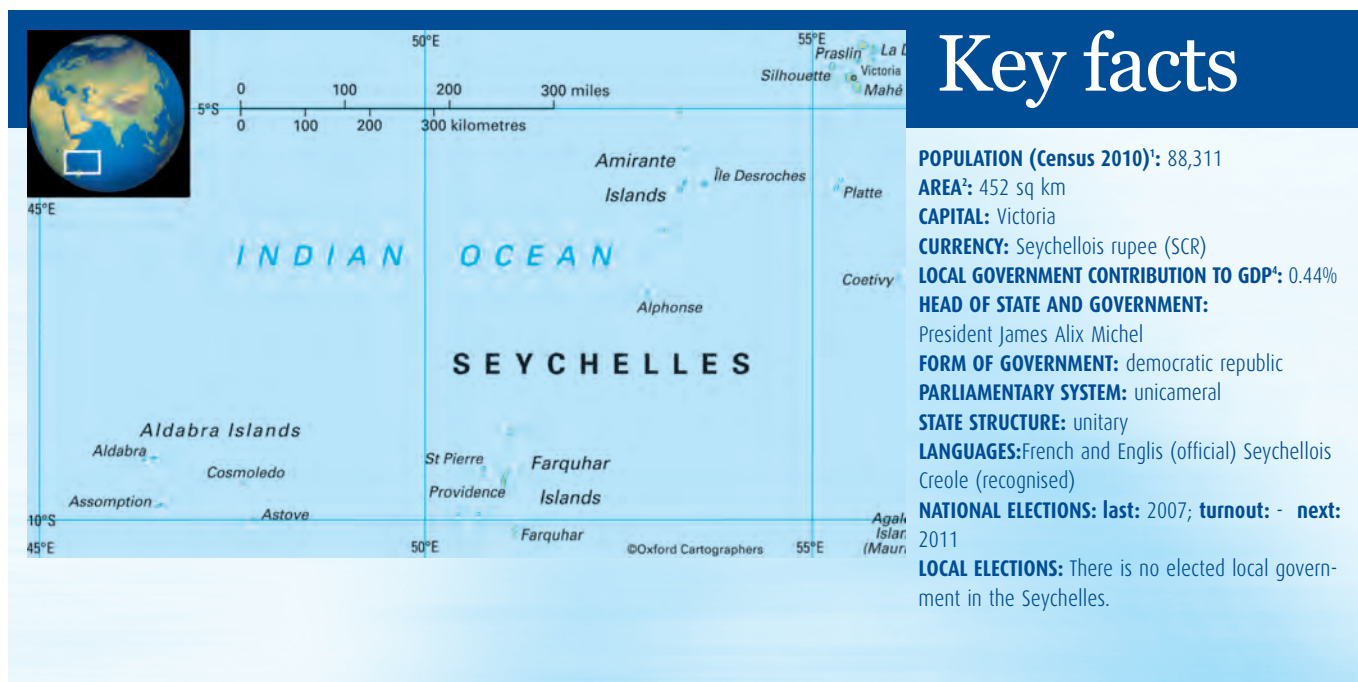


The local government system in Seychelles



SUMMARY

The Seychelles is a republican democracy with an appointed local administration. There is no constitutional provision for, or legislation governing, local government. The local administration has no powers to raise revenue and all funds are transferred from central government. Through the local administration, the government facilitates community based services and the intervention of various agencies operating in the districts.

1. CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

The Seychelles is a republican democracy. The president is the executive head of both the state and the government and is directly elected by universal suffrage for a five-year term. The president appoints a cabinet of ministers from among the citizens of the Seychelles, with the approval of parliament. The unicameral parliament is known as the National Assembly and currently has a membership of 34; 25 members elected using the first-past-the-post system, and up to ten additional members, allocated proportionately to all parties participating in the election, on the basis of one seat for each ten percent of the votes won. All members of the National Assembly, whether elected directly or indirectly, hold office for five years.

2. LEGAL BASIS FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

2.1 Constitutional provisions:

There are no constitutional provisions for local government.

2.2 Main legislative texts:

The Local Government Act 1991 was suspended in 1993 when the National Assembly voted to dissolve district councils when the new constitution was introduced. The constitution allows for local administration however, there is no relevant legislation to empower this. Public service orders regulate the functioning of state administrative officers posted in the district administration. Financial management regulations govern non-administrative transactions.

3. STRUCTURE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

3.1 Local government within the state:

There is one level of local governance: the district/local administration, which runs each of the 25 constituencies/districts.

3.2 Ministerial oversight:

The Community Development Department (CDD) within the Ministry for Community Development, Youth and Sports (MCDYS) has responsibility for overseeing local governance in the 25 local

district administrations. The Minister of Local Government performs his or her functions 'under the direction of the president.' The CDD comprises the secretariat and three divisions: administration and finance, community development and community management. The chief executive officer ensures the effective planning, and implementation, of all central government projects at the grassroots level and executes central government's other decisions relating to the districts.

3.3 District community councils:

District community councils were reintroduced in 1999; the Minister of Local Government appoints the 12 members of each district community council for a two-year term. The councils, which meet every two months, are advisory and function under the aegis of the MCDYS. The appointed district administrator convenes and chairs meetings and supervises operations. The local member of the National Assembly (MNA) sits, in principle, on the council. The other council members represent sub-district areas. Local residents known for their interests, experience, or contribution can also be appointed as members. As sub-district representatives and members of the national

Table 1. Distribution of councils and population

Region	No. of districts	Population (Census 2010)	% rural
Greater Victoria	8	25,507	n/a
North Mahe	3	12,354	n/a
West Mahe	4	13,145	n/a
South Mahe	3	10,110	n/a
East Mahe	4	15,141	n/a
Praslin	2	8,374	n/a
La Digue	1	2,596	n/a
Outer Islands* (OIs)	-	1,084	n/a
TOTAL	25 + OIs	88,311	n/a

*the Outer Islands do not formally form a district, but they are often considered as one for administrative purposes. Source: National Statistics Bureau¹

assembly they bring forth the expressed wishes, aspirations and day to day concerns of the community.

The other two district based structures are the District Social Committee (DSC) and the District Team (DT), they are both chaired by the district administrator and members meet on a monthly basis. The DSC is made up of community life programme representatives, who operate at the district level. The main aims of the DSC are to coordinate the planning and implementation of programmes, facilitate dialogue, optimise resources and ensure unity in local actions. The DT ensures the collaborative actions of all partners in undertaking community development work. The team is the custodian of the 'local common agenda.' Much is done to enhance partnerships with the private sector and non-governmental bodies.

4. ELECTIONS

4.1 Recent local elections:

Local government is appointed rather than elected. Fifteen of the 25 district administrators and the mayor of Victoria are female.

5. SYSTEMS FOR COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

5.1 Legal requirement:

There is no legal requirement for community involvement.

5.2 Implementation:

Although local government in Seychelles is appointed, it nevertheless brings together many groups, with some elements of democratic consultation and participation. There is an annual public meeting held in each district at which members of the community can ask questions or seek clarification on local issues.

5.3 E-government:

There is currently no e-government strategy.

6. ORGANISED LOCAL GOVERNMENT

6.1 National local government association:

There is no national organisation for local authorities.

6.2 Other local government associations:

In 1994 the Association of the Districts of Victoria was set up. This is registered under the Registration of Associations Act 1959 as subsequently amended, and its chairperson was granted the status of mayor in 1997. Since 2003, the local government minister appoints the mayor with the cabinet's approval for five years (previously, on behalf of its districts and forming part of the Association, the MNAs of Victoria elected the chairperson). Receiving financial aid from the government and other sources, the Association assists local authorities in their socio-economic, sports and cultural activities. The Mayor of Victoria represents the capital of Seychelles both nationally and internationally. Only legislators and representatives of the districts of Victoria are admitted to the Association. The executive committee consists of the mayor, a secretary and a treasurer, the latter two are elected for one year at its annual general assembly. Chairing the Association, the mayor is also its executive head and spokesperson. A 12-member consultative body, whose members represent the various segments of the capital's society, is appointed by the mayor for five years to help him/her execute projects in Victoria.

7. INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

District administration offices operate with the close collaboration of central government officials and committees. An inter-agency consultative committee for services has also been established at the Community Development Secretariat and meets quarterly to address pertinent issues raised by all the 25 districts. The U-First (Tourism) Committee is a formal structure comprising one district

administrator, serving on behalf of the CDD, and other members representing ministries, sections of the public administration and private business.

8. MONITORING SYSTEMS

The internal auditor of the MCDYS and the auditor from the Ministry of Finance examine the accounts of each district administration. The Auditor General, holder of a constitutional post, also checks the accounts. The Ombudsman may intervene to investigate complaints relating to such transactions.

9. FINANCE, STAFFING AND RESOURCES

Budgets for local administrations are set by central government.

9.1 Locally raised revenue:

No taxes are assigned to the local (district) administrations.

9.2 Transfers:

Local government is entirely financed by central government. The MCDYS pays a sum in advance every quarter to each local administration. Once allocated, the districts exercise control over their allocated budget. Each district receives a yearly allocation of approximately SCR125,000 (USD\$10,500) to meet basic operational expenses. Personal emoluments are not included. A total annual allocation of SCR800,000 (USD\$65,500) is also allocated to the districts for undertaking small community projects.

9.3 Local authority staff:

District administrators are appointed by the MCDYS to lead local authorities on a two-year renewable contract, and are responsible to the principal secretary. The district administrator recruits staff, subject to approval by the MCDYS; the typical structure is three officers and some general workers. The officers include an assistant administrative officer, a secretary and a works

Table 2. Revenue and expenditure for Mont Fleuri District, 2003

Revenue	SCR 000s	Expenditure	SCR 000s
Government transfer	158,900	Operations & maintenance	79.5
		Sports	55.6
		Community life	23.8
TOTAL	158,900	TOTAL	158.9

supervisor, cleaner and a fields technician. Disciplinary power rests with the district administrator acting under delegated powers, in compliance with the Public service orders. Central government pays officers' salaries, the wages of employees in the establishments run by the local administration, and the wages of any labourers working under the unemployment relief scheme.

10. DISTRIBUTION OF SERVICE DELIVERY RESPONSIBILITY

Structures and mechanisms have been established to ensure enhanced service delivery at the local level. The local administration office is seen as the focal point through which service providers engage with the community. Through the local administration, the CDD facilitates general leisure, recreational, health and social services and encourages active citizenship through various established programmes and clubs.

References and useful websites

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