

Foresight and Systems Thinking for Strategic Planning and Financing for Sustainable Development Goals in Seychelles

Concept Note and Agenda

Hybrid Training of Trainers Workshop

6-7 February 2024

Capacity Building Workshop

19-22 February 2024

1. Background

Through its long-term Vision 2033, the Government of Seychelles is focused upon “*A resilient, responsible and prosperous nation of healthy, educated and empowered Seychellois living together in harmony with nature and engaged with the wider world.*”

Vision 2033 is being implemented through a series of three five-year National Development Strategies, the first of which is the National Development Strategy 2019-2023 (NDS). The NDS has six thematic pillars and is strongly aligned to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Good governance, People at the center of development, Social cohesion, Economic transformation, Innovative economy, Environmental sustainability & resilience.

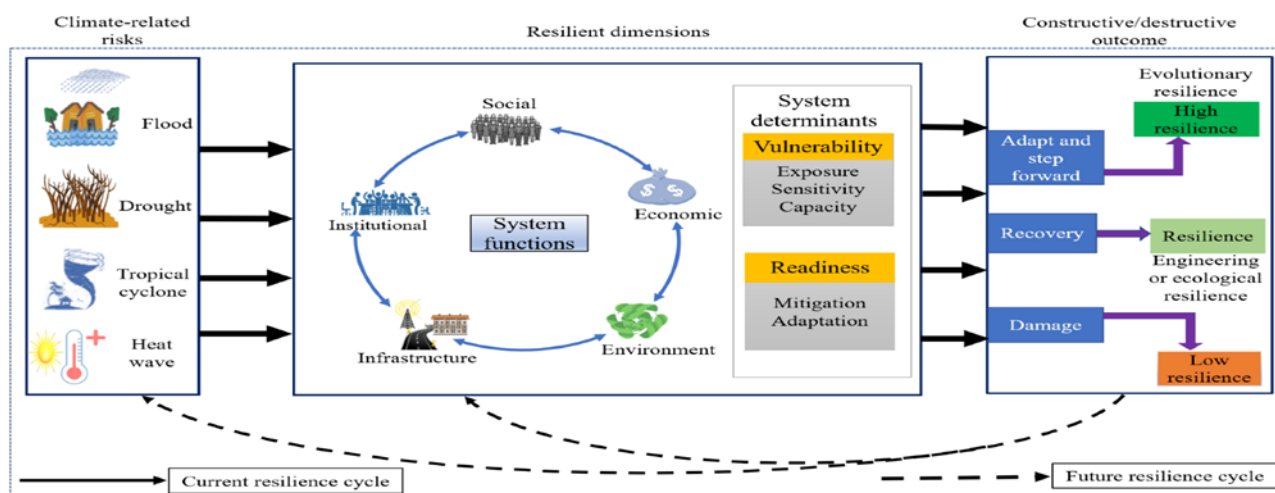
Seychelles has offered repeated evidence of its resilience to past crises and ability for profound transformation following crises. It has also shown encouraging signs of recovery post the COVID-19 pandemic.

However, considering the persisting multiple overlapping vulnerabilities, including climate change and strong reliance on strategic imports like energy, food, and inputs, crisis response and recovery will continue to be relevant beyond 2023 while emphasizing the urgent need to build socioeconomic and environmental resilience. With only a few years left to 2030, acceleration of the SDGs implementation in a more resilient and more diversified setting will be a priority, including through the national priorities for sustainable development, as expressed in the National Development Strategy, including economic transformation, human capital (health and education), environmental sustainability and climate change resilience.

UN DESA and UNITAR, in collaboration with UN RCO Mauritius and the Government of Seychelles, initiated a capacity building process on strategic planning and policy coherence for sustainable development, underpinned by systems thinking approaches in 2021 and supported the government with rethinking and formulating development pathways towards high impact, more resilience, and a longer-term perspective.

In parallel, the UN and the Government of Seychelles jointly engaged, together with other sustainable development stakeholders, in a foresight exercise to inform the UN-Government Cooperation Framework 2024-2028, identifying emerging trends, risks and opportunities within different future scenarios.

The Government of Seychelles requested further support on foresight and systems thinking to strengthen an evidence-based, participatory, coherent and risk-informed planning framework for the development and implementation of its national development and budgeting strategy towards a more resilient, inclusive, and diversified economy. The Government also requested to address how to reflect such policy planning approaches into the policymaking culture and institutional reforms.



2. Overall objective

The overall objective of this capacity building is to contribute to a more coherent, participatory, prioritized and evidence-based governance framework in support of the planning and implementation of Seychelles' National Development Strategy and aims at increasing the country's resilient and inclusive sustainable development.

This capacity building approach towards a more coherent, evidence-based and agile strategic planning framework will be concretized by providing support to:

1. Build human and institutional capacities on systems thinking for policy coherence and long-term planning among government officials and help them apply it directly into the national budgeting and planning process.
2. Build human and institutional capacities in the area of strategic foresight to help the government officials make strategic choices and manage risks to shape the future under conditions of uncertainty.

Government officials/ participants will be involved in the co-design of system maps based on the existing national development strategy which will contribute implicitly to strengthening result-based management and will trigger modernization of the public administration of Seychelles. They will run a series of foresight exercises, within this systems approach, to understand the evolution of the

system's features and the feedback loops in different future scenarios, and identify emerging signals and trends, as well as risks and opportunities.

3. Strategy

In support of the 2024-2028 UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework's overall intention **"to provide strategic support for a whole of government policy and systems shift towards achieving greater resilience and inclusion"**, UN DESA/DPIDG and UNITAR propose to hold a series of capacity building workshops – including a training of trainers from the Ministry of Finance - in February 2024 for government officials from different ministries and for academics.

1. Hybrid Training of Trainers Workshop for government officials of the Planning and Finance Divisions – Ministry of Finance - 6-7 February 2024

Objective of the Training of Trainers

Co-create a system-based methodology for inter-sectoral collaboration and usage of scientific evidence to inform annual planning, resource allocation and budgeting processes to increase the impact of NDS implementation: a tailored approach of capacity building on systems thinking and strategic foresight applied to the concrete planning and budgeting context of the Seychelles.

Strengthen the capacities of the Ministry of Finance officials in applying and mentoring others on system-thinking-based approaches to strategic planning and allocation of resources in the context of the preparation of the state budget.

Output/ results of the ToT

- An example of a Causal Loop Diagram and Guidance document on how to use systems thinking and strategic foresight to improve coherent, forward looking, risk-informed policy making and implementation, inter-ministerial collaboration and evidence/ data in the annual planning and budgeting process.
 - Number of officials from Ministry of Finance trained (planned 10-15 participants).
- #### **2. Face-to-face capacity building workshop 2 sessions – Government officials from different ministries – 19-22 and 22-24 February 2024**

Objective of the capacity building workshop:

Revisit internal policies, processes, procedures, coordination arrangements among ministries to better gear annual planning and resource allocation towards NDS priorities and SDGs through a participatory approach by brainstorming and applying foresight methods. The basis for the co-design approach will be the guidance document resulting from the hybrid ToT workshop.

Strengthen capacities of officials from line Ministries to use systems thinking and strategic foresight to prioritize and collaborate across Ministries on resource allocation and short-term planning and target-setting around nexuses of NDS and SDG challenges.

Output of the workshop

- Adjusted and refined guidance document reflecting proposed changes on internal policies, processes, procedures, use of data and scientific evidence and cross-sector coordination arrangements.
- Number of officials from line Ministries trained (around 150 participants in total).

Approach

- The capacity building will enhance the basic understanding of the participants of systems thinking based on the Iceberg systems thinking model.
- Introduction to the application of the qualitative systems thinking approach of Causal loop diagrams to co-design coherent, evidence-based, and prioritized policies.
- Introduction to strategic foresight and application of foresight methodologies such as visioning, backcasting, horizon scanning and wind-tunneling (risk analysis)
- Whole of government and whole of society approach: inter-ministerial collaboration and institutional reforms required and stakeholders' engagement approaches.

3. Target group

The hybrid Training of Trainers (ToT) will be provided for around 25 government officials from the Ministry of Finance, National Planning and Trade Ministry, Planning and Finance division, in particular Financial Controllers, Principal Secretaries and Executive Directors from Macro-Economic and Forecasting, National Planning and Budget division.

The inter-ministerial in-person training will be offered for around 150 decision makers, policy planners and program staff from around 15 ministries and development agencies.

Agenda Training of Trainers workshop	
6 February 2024 - 09:00- 17:00	
Time	Session
09:00 – 09:15	Opening remarks from Planning Department, Ministry of Finance, Seychelles
09:15 – 09:25	Introductions
09:25 – 09:30	ToT workshop objectives and structure
09:30 – 10:30	Presentation and interactive discussions on Strategic Foresight
10:30 – 10:45	Coffee break
10:45 – 11:45	Presentation and interactive discussions on Systems Thinking: Key ideas, Principles and Examples of Tools
11:45 – 12:00	Q&A

12:00 – 13:00	Lunch break
13:00 - 13:15	Re-cap on Systems thinking and tools to be used in ToT
13:15 - 13:45	Activity in groups: Interactions around the issue of labour
13:45 - 14:00	Presentation: Systems thinking in the context of strategic foresight and NDS
14:00 – 14 :45	Foresight exercise: Visioning and back casting based on Vision 2033
14:45 - 15:00	Coffee/tea break
15:00 - 15:45	Activity in plenary: Joint development of a Causal Loop Diagram (labour as entry point) and identification of feedback loops and leverage points
15:45 – 16:30	Activity in groups: What do we want to monitor? From entry points to Leverage points
16:30 – 17:00	Activity in groups: Formulation of policy pathways
Agenda Training of Trainers workshop	
7 February 2024 - 09:00- 17:00	
Time	Session
09:00 – 10:00	Activity in plenary: Formulation of policy pathways
10:00 – 11:00	Foresight exercise: Horizon Scanning – Three horizons
11:00 – 11:15	Coffee break
11:15 – 12:00	Foresight exercise: Wind Tunneling – Analyzing upcoming risks and defining mitigation measures
12:00 – 13:00	Lunch
13:00-14:00	Analyzing Scenario-Policy Pathways Matrix
14:00- 14:45	Activity in groups and plenary: From long-term objectives to mid-term and short- term policies
14:45-15:30	Activity in groups and plenary: Review of current government procedures and arrangements for annual planning, budgeting and RBM against findings of the systems thinking exercise
15:30-15:45	Coffee/tea break
15:45- 16:15	Activity in groups and in plenary: Discussion on changes required in terms of practices, processes, and institutional arrangements.
16:15-16:45	Activity in plenary: Formulation of recommendations as a basis for a guidance document
16:45-17:00	ToT workshop evaluation and Closing remarks
Agenda for the inter-ministerial workshop	
19-21 February 2024	
Session	Session
08:45 - 08:55	Arrival of participants

09:00 – 09:30	Welcome remarks by the Ministry of Finance Welcome remarks by the UNRC Seychelles and Mauritius Introduction of participants from different ministries Introduction by UN DESA and UNITAR: setting out objectives and outputs of the Training workshop
09:30 – 10:00	Presentation: Systems thinking: key ideas, principles and example of tools Q&A
10:00 - 10:25	Activity in groups: Interactions around different entry points facilitated by the participants trained in the ToT workshop from the Ministry of Finance MoF team, UNDESA, UNITAR and RCO Seychelles.
10:25 - 10:45	Presentation: Systems thinking in the context of strategic foresight and NDS
10:45 - 11:00	Coffee/tea break
11:00 – 11:45	Activity in groups: Visioning and Back-casting based on Vision 2033
11:45 - 12:15	Presentation: the co-created Causal Loop Diagram (CLD) (labour as entry point), leverage points, and formulation of policy pathways against possible futures by MoF ToT team
12:15 - 13:15	Lunch
13:15 - 14:00	Activity in groups: development of CLDs with selected Strategic Plans priorities (and/or SDGs) as entry points facilitated by the MoF ToT team, UNDESA, UNITAR and RCO Seychelles.
14:00 - 14:30	Activity in plenary: Reporting back and Debrief/ Q&A
14:30 - 15:15	Activity in groups: Development of pathways and policy options around 3-4 selected sectors
15:15 - 15:45	Activity in plenary: Reporting back and Debrief/ Q&A
15:45 - 16:30	Activity in groups: Horizon Scanning part one – Horizon One and Horizon Three
16:30 - 16:45	Q&A and wrap-up

**Agenda 21 February 2024
(same target group of participants)**

Time	Session
09:00 – 09:05	Recap from Day one and presentation of objectives for Day two
09:05-09:50	Activity in groups: Horizon Scanning part Two – Horizon Two: Sustainable development pathways based on the NDS and NDC
09:50 – 10:20	Presentation: An integrated CLD and discussion on feedback loops, leverage points, performance indicators (compared to SDG indicators) and possible pathways
10:20 – 11:00	Activity in groups and plenary: Discussion on indicators and possible pathways
11:00 – 11:15	Tea/coffee break
11:15 – 11:45	Activity in plenary: Building Scenario-Policy Pathways Matrix

11:45-12:30	Activity in groups and plenary: From long-term objectives to mid-term and short-term policies
12:30-13:30	Lunch
13:30-14 :00	Activity in groups: Discussion on implications of Strategic Foresight and Systems thinking for long-term, short-term planning, budgeting and inter-ministerial collaboration
14:00 – 14:30	Presentation MoF: Draft recommendations on changes required in terms of practices, processes, and institutional arrangements for annual planning, budgeting and RBM
14:30 – 15:00	Activity in groups: Discussion on challenges faced by line Ministries in more integrated, collaborative, participatory and evidence-based approaches to annual planning/budgeting and RBM and feedback on recommendations
15:00-15:30	Activity in plenary: Feedback on recommendations and formulation of additional recommendations as a basis for the guidance document
15:30 – 15:45	Workshop evaluation
15:45 - 16:00	Wrap up and next steps by PS Agathine

A similar program will be provided on 23 February 2024 for a second group of participants from different ministries and development agencies.