

2022 Workplan of Seychelles' National Multi-Stakeholder Group of the Fisheries Transparency Initiative (FiTI)

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Approved by National Multi-Stakeholder Group: [Date]

INTRODUCTION

The Fisheries Transparency Initiative (FiTI) is implemented in Seychelles through a National Multi-Stakeholder Group (NMSG), consisting of 12 representatives from government (4), business (4) and organised civil society (4).¹

Together, this group assumes several important responsibilities, such as:

- Determining the country's annual FiTI Workplan
- Producing annual FiTI Reports that provide an assessment on the accessibility and completeness of information in the public domain for all transparency requirements set forth in the FiTI Standard (Part I, section B.1)
- Making recommendations on how to improve information published by national authorities
- Contributing to public debates on how the fisheries sector is managed.

The purpose of the *2022 Workplan of Seychelles' National Multi-Stakeholder Group of the Fisheries Transparency Initiative (FiTI)* is to document the NMSG's core objectives and activities to support an efficient, effective and relevant implementation of the FiTI in Seychelles. Furthermore, possible constraints (risks) in achieving these objectives as well as mitigating activities are highlighted.

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES FROM PREVIOUS REPORTING PERIODS

The Seychelles' FiTI NMSG did not produce a Workplan for the calendar year 2021, resulting in a one-year gap between the previous 2019/2020 Workplan and this current 2022 Workplan. The reason for this gap is primarily attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic, which not only impacted the ability of the NMSG to hold face-to-face meetings, but also triggered dire health and socio-economic challenges for all participating organisations, which had to readjust and reprioritise their own operations during this timeframe.

Nevertheless, several important activities were carried out in 2021, most notably the publication of the country's first two FiTI Reports. This 2022 Workplan therefore summarises activities undertaken over the previous *two* reporting periods (2020 and 2021).

¹ <http://www.mofbe.gov.sc/fiti/national-multi-stakeholder-group/>

Highlights of 2020

Overall, the NMSG was only able to meet 2 times during 2020. Frequently changing national public health restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic – specifically stay-at-home orders for non-essential workers and a national lockdown – prevented more regular meetings from being held (for more information, please also refer to section ‘Constraints’).

The FiTI International Board officially approved Seychelles application to become a FiTI Candidate Country on 3 April 2020. This followed the submission of relevant documents by former Vice President Vincent Meriton on behalf of Seychelles FiTI NMSG on 6 March 2020.

With this, objectives 2 (*‘Empowering NMSG members and FiTI National Secretariat in attaining FiTI objectives and fulfilling their responsibilities and mission’*) and 4 (*‘Submitting FiTI Candidate application for the Seychelles to the International Board’*) of the 2019/20 workplan have been fulfilled.

A kick-off forum entitled ‘Transparency of Fisheries in Seychelles’, jointly organised by the Department of the Blue Economy and the FiTI International Secretariat, took place on 30 September 2020 to stimulate debates on how fisheries information is provided to the public. Over 75 representatives from civil society, government and businesses attended the event, and participated in engaging discussions on the implications of enhancing fisheries transparency in Seychelles, Seychelles’ upcoming first FiTI Report and the expectations, anticipated opportunities and potential constraints for FiTI in the country.

This event contributed to the fulfilment of objective 3 of the 2019/20 workplan (*‘Increasing the visibility of FiTI Seychelles locally, regionally and internationally’*).

Also, the first FiTI Reporting process started in 2020. Dr Jude Bijoux was appointed by Seychelles’ FiTI NMSG as the Report Compiler for the Seychelles’ first FiTI Report (covering information for the calendar year 2019), and began his work in October 2020.

Highlights of 2021

Seychelles submitted its (and the world’s) first report to the FiTI on 15 April 2021, in a high-level forum attended by President Wavel Ramkalawan and Minister for Fisheries, Jean-Francois Ferrari, among other notable figures. The report, which covered information for the calendar year 2019 and addressed all 12 transparency requirements of the FiTI Standard, was very well received both nationally and internationally, receiving significant media coverage and stakeholder feedback. With the support of the FiTI International Secretariat, the launch of the FiTI Report was covered by a large number of reputable organisations, including the Open Government Partnership, the RISE UP Network and the Southern African Development Community, as well as media houses including SeaFoodSource, MarketWatch and others.

The NMSG also submitted its second FiTI Report (covering information for the calendar year 2020 and again addressing all 12 transparency requirements) on 15 December 2021.

With these two reports within one calendar year, objective 5 (*Submitting the first FiTI Report for the Seychelles*) of the 2019/20 workplan has been overachieved.

In the face of ongoing national public health restrictions due to COVID-19, a planned 'Tour des Seychelles' led by members of Seychelles' FiTI NMSG to disseminate the findings of these two reports has unfortunately not come to fruition to date.

Despite this, a number of outreach activities to sensitise stakeholders on the FiTI did occur over 2021. These included, inter alia,:

- a meeting led by the FiTI National Lead and FiTI National Secretariat (accompanied by members of the FiTI International Secretariat) with staff of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 1 September 2021,
- a meeting with members of Seychelles' National Assembly on 30 September 2021, and
- an internal training session with senior staff of the Seychelles Fishing Authority on 22 October 2021, among others.

Furthermore, several important steps were also taken to increase the visibility of FiTI within Seychelles and beyond, including the following:

- The Ministry of Fisheries and Blue Economy (MoFBE) created a dedicated FiTI sub-site on their website (<http://www.mofbe.gov.sc>), featuring important information about the initiative.
- Seychelles FiTI Report Compiler, Dr Jude Bijoux, presented the lessons learned of the country's first reporting process during the webinar 'TRANSPARENCY AT WORK – Lessons learned from Africa' (in April 2021), jointly organized by the International Anti-Corruption Academy (IACA) and the Fisheries Transparency Initiative (FiTI).
- The highlights of the Seychelles' first FiTI Report were presented at the 11th Session of the Southwest Indian Ocean Fisheries Commission (SWIOFC) in August 2021, in collaboration with the FiTI International Secretariat.
- The country's first FiTI Report was presented at a virtual World Bank internal staff meeting in November 2021 by Principal Secretary for Fisheries, Roy Clarisse.

All these events and activities contributed to the fulfilment of objective 3 of the 2019/20 workplan (*Increasing the visibility of FiTI Seychelles locally, regionally and internationally*).

Additionally, other government agencies beyond the MoFBE (the FiTI Lead Ministry in Seychelles) became more involved in the FiTI process, such as the Seychelles Fishing Authority which now has a dedicated FiTI focal person to deal with matters relating to the FiTI.

Constraints in 2020/2021

While almost all of the objectives set forth in the 2019/20 workplan for Seychelles' FiTI NMSG have been fulfilled, several constraints have impacted the operational effectiveness of this group as well as the overall impact of the FiTI on public debates and national policy making. This includes the following key constraints:

- The ongoing public health measures in response to COVID-19 impacted the ability of face-to-face NMSG meetings (and the ability of NMSG Members to physically meet other stakeholders. As a result, a bigger emphasis was placed on virtual meetings to ensure the continuity of some stakeholder awareness raising activities during 2020/2021. However, this virtual approach proved to be significantly less conducive to achieving objectives than face-to-face meetings. In addition, the effectiveness of virtual meetings was affected by unreliable internet connections, an issue common in Seychelles.
- General lack of public awareness of the FiTI process outside of Seychelles' core fisheries community, despite several high-level events, press releases and increased online presence.
- Key stakeholders that traditionally play a strong role in ensuring the FiTI contributes to public debates (e.g. the media, civil society organisations) are not engaging with the NMSG in Seychelles or utilising the increased level of information to stimulate public debates.²
- Lack of clear organisational and personnel responsibility for running the FiTI National Secretariat (between the DoBE and the SFA). This also contribute to the non-fulfilment of objective 1 of the 2019/20 workplan (*'Setting up of National Secretariat'*).

It is assumed that the first three constraints, as listed above, will continue to play a role in the level of progress that can be achieved during calendar year 2022.

² It is currently unclear whether this lack of involvement, in particular from civil society organisations, is mainly due to a lack of interest in fisheries management, or due to a lack of adequate capacity and support to participate meaningfully in the FiTI (e.g. sufficient information, resources, time). Furthermore, it is generally known that the civil society sector in Seychelles is still in its infancy and there are few groups with the necessary leadership and focus to actually perform oversight functions, raise issues of national interest in the public sphere or hold decision makers accountable.

WORKPLAN FOR 2022

Objective 1: Optimise the FiTI National Secretariat

This objective seeks to ensure that the NMSG and the overall FiTI implementation process in Seychelles are efficiently supported by a dedicated and properly resourced personnel from either the MoFBE or the SFA.

	Activities	Timeframe	Results	Responsibility	Costs/Funding sources
1.1	Assign an existing staff member of the MoFBE or SFA to act as a dedicated part-time FiTI National Secretariat, with clearly assigned responsibilities	March 2022	A dedicated and fully-resourced FiTI National Secretariat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FiTI National Lead 	Funding needed only if new staff brought in to fill role
1.2	Explore operational synergies with the already established secretariat for the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) ³	June 2022	The FiTI National Secretariat is closely and regularly collaborating with Seychelles' National EITI Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FiTI National Lead 	Not relevant

³ Ensuring, e.g. that potential synergies areas that concern both FiTI and the EITI (e.g. beneficial ownership) are taken advantage of.

Objective 2: Elect new members to Seychelles' FiTI NMSG

This objective seeks to ensure that the FiTI implementation process is led by a FiTI NMSG whose members are appropriately qualified and fully, actively and effectively engaged in the FiTI.

	Activities	Timeframe	Results	Responsibility	Costs/Funding sources
2.1	Conduct attendance analysis of 2020 and 2021 FiTI NMSG meetings	February 2022	The production of a summary table detailing attendance of NMSG members at NMSG meetings in 2020 and 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FiTI NMSG • FiTI National Secretariat 	No funding needed
2.2	Review member terms and attendance analysis to update composition of the FiTI NMSG for the next two years ⁴ , if applicable	March 2022	The FiTI National MSG reflects the composition of Seychelles' fisheries sector, comprising of appropriately qualified and fully, actively and effectively engaged representatives, and is perceived as legitimate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FiTI National Lead • FiTI NMSG 	No funding needed
2.3	Obtain on-boarding training from FiTI International Secretariat for new NMSG members, if applicable	July 2022	New NMSG members are properly sensitised on their roles and responsibilities as well as the overall process, principles, and objectives of the FiTI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FiTI National Lead 	No funding needed

⁴ This may also include dedicated Alternates.

Objective 3: Continue increasing the visibility of Seychelles' FiTI engagement locally and regionally

This objective seeks to ensure that a wide range of stakeholders, both in Seychelles and the wider Indian Ocean/East African region) are sensitised on Seychelles' ongoing engagement in FiTI and the role of transparency and participation in sustainable fisheries management.

	Activities	Timeframe	Results	Responsible	Costs/Funding sources
3.1	Conduct the 'Tour des Seychelles'	March-July 2022	Various stakeholder groups are sensitised on key findings/pertinent information from Seychelles' 2020/2021 FiTI Reports relevant for their own interest/operations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FiTI NMSG 	No funding needed, as each NMSG member briefs the stakeholder group they represent
3.2	Organise fisheries transparency 'townhall meeting'	Second quarter 2022 (e.g. World Fisheries Day on 8 June)	Public interest generated on findings and conclusions of Seychelles' 2020 FiTI Report, contributing to national policy debates on fisheries management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FiTI National Lead • FiTI National Secretariat • Certain members of FiTI NMSG 	French Embassy to Seychelles (TBC)
3.3	Organise 'transparency in action' workshops		Internal NMSG workshop explores ideas on how information presented in FiTI Reports can be utilised to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • facilitate better decision making regarding Seychelles' fisheries, as well as 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FiTI NMSG • FiTI National Secretariat 	

			<ul style="list-style-type: none">• identify additional public policies (e.g. regarding beneficial ownership).		
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Objective 4: Submit the 2021 FiTI Report for the Seychelles

This objective seeks to support the next FiTI reporting process, resulting in the compilation, approval and public dissemination of the 2021 FiTI Report.

	Activities	Timeframe	Results	Responsible	Costs/Funding sources
4.1	Appoint Report Compiler for 2021 FiTI Report	May 2022	A consultant is hired to act as Report Compiler and collectively approved by the NMSG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Drafting of ToR:</i> FiTI National Secretariat • <i>Approval of ToR:</i> NMSG • <i>Procurement of consultant:</i> World Bank 	World Bank funding already secured
4.2	Compile draft 2021 FiTI Report	September 2022	The Report Compiler compiles the first draft of the 2021 FiTI Report for submission to the NMSG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report Compiler 	No funding needed
4.3	Approve 2021 FiTI Report	October 2021	The NMSG collectively approves the contents of the FiTI Report (including joint recommendations on how the government can continue increasing transparency levels)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FiTI NMSG 	No funding needed
4.4	Disseminate 2021 FiTI Report (nationally and regionally)	November 2021	The NMSG contributes to wide distribution of the 2021 FiTI Report to local and regional stakeholders through various communication and outreach activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FiTI NMSG • FiTI Lead Ministry (MoFBE) 	No funding needed, but MoFBE communication

					resources need to be engaged
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Objective 5: Strengthen administration & governance of Seychelles' FiTI implementation

This objective seeks to strengthen the FiTI NMSG's own internal administration and governance to ensure an effective, efficient and impactful implementation of the FiTI in Seychelles.

	Activities	Timeframe	Results	Responsibility	Costs/Funding sources
5.1	Conduct up to 4 FiTI NMSG meetings	Throughout 2022		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FiTI National Lead • FiTI National Secretariat 	Meeting costs (i.e. room, catering) are covered by FiTI Lead Ministry
5.2	Participate in validation process (e.g. interviews with Independent Validator)	June-July 2022	Independent Validator gains accurate and honest insights into national stakeholders' views of the efficiency, scope, intent and impact of FiTI implementation in Seychelles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FiTI National Lead • Members of FiTI NMSG • Others 	Costs of independent validation covered by the FiTI International Secretariat
5.3	Adopt 2022 workplan based on recommendations of	To be determined	An updated workplan that incorporates any corrective actions stated by the FiTI International Board in its Compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FiTI National Lead • FiTI NMSG 	No funding needed

	final compliance statement, if any ⁵		Statement following the conclusion of Seychelles' validation.		
5.4	Determine 2023 workplan of Seychelles' FiTI NMSG	October 2022	A workplan in accordance with section B.3.4 of the FiTI Standard is approved by the National MSG and made publicly available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FiTI National Lead • FiTI NMSG 	No funding needed

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⁵ Depending on the availability of the final compliance statement, such recommendations may also be included in the 2023 workplan.