



# Diaspora engagement mapping SEYCHELLES



## Facts & figures

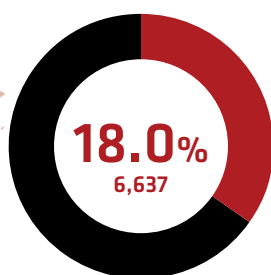
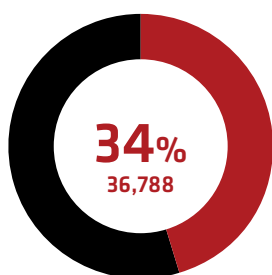
### Emigration



% of emigrants in total population



% of which in the EU



♂ 45.5%  
♀ 54.5%

♂ 34.9%  
♀ 65.1%



Remittances as a share of GDP: **0.6%**  
Remittances inflow (USD million): **11**

### Top countries of destination



Mozambique	16,997
United Kingdom	4,600
Australia	3,174
South Africa	1,162
Canada	1,101

### Political rights



Dual citizenship<sup>1</sup>



Right to vote in national elections for citizens residing abroad<sup>2</sup>



**Seychelles does not have a diaspora engagement policy.**

1 Dual citizenship is not recognized. The government of Seychelles only recognizes dual citizenship in specific cases concerning native born citizens of Seychelles who later obtain another citizenship for domestic or economic convenience (such as to work abroad) or involuntarily through marriage to a foreign citizen. See Seychelles Department of Immigration and Civil Status. (2013). A Quick Guide to the New Seychelles Immigration Rules, available at [http://www.statehouse.gov.sc/uploads/downloads/filepath\\_61.pdf](http://www.statehouse.gov.sc/uploads/downloads/filepath_61.pdf)  
Citizenship laws are based upon the Citizenship of Seychelles Act, dated June 29, 1976, and the Constitution of Seychelles, 1970, consolidated to 2016. Full text available at: [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_protect/---protrav/-ilo\\_aids/documents/legal-document/wcms\\_127610.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_protect/---protrav/-ilo_aids/documents/legal-document/wcms_127610.pdf)

2 Article 114 of the Constitution (2017 amendment) [https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Seychelles\\_2017.pdf?lang=en](https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Seychelles_2017.pdf?lang=en)

## Overview of the policy and legislative framework



- 2019** ● Vision 2033<sup>3</sup> refers to the need to recruit diaspora and expatriate skilled professionals, although no special provisions have been made for the former, or to promote circular migration. This may change after Seychellois citizens lose the right to visa-free travel to Europe in 2022.
- 2019** ▼  
**2023** ● Seychelles National Development Strategy (SNDS)<sup>4</sup> underlines recruitment and retention of diaspora and expatriate professionals as a solution to address the country's significant skills shortage challenges.
- 2019** ● National Labour Migration Policy<sup>5</sup> sets out objectives in relation to developing an efficient labour market (3.1) and 'managing and upskilling the labour force' (3.4), including through diaspora skills transfer.<sup>6</sup> It includes the following objectives relevant to diaspora engagement:
- To consider mobilizing technical and intellectual diasporas to engage in public sector development projects, or to provide technical assistance;
  - To provide a clear mandate to embassies and consular representatives abroad for engaging in diaspora relations.



### Trends:

Often refracted through the lens of the politics of the Cold War, relations between Seychelles and its diaspora were strained until 1991, when a multi-party government returned to the Seychelles, due in part to the political activity of diaspora in exile. Under a joint exile return programme started in 1986/7, the Seychelles International Repatriation Onward Programme, most of the exiled political factions' leaders returned to the country.<sup>7</sup>

There have been recurrent calls to allow diaspora voting rights. The Seychelles diaspora are very active politically, and have been known to fly to the country to participate in elections. In 2019, President Danny Faure promised that a bill for a referendum on allowing the Seychellois diaspora to take part in elections will be "tabled at the appropriate time", although this was later withdrawn after criticism.<sup>8</sup>

Emigration of skilled professionals from Seychelles has been a challenge for the country since the 1970s, with educated Seychellois seeking employment opportunities abroad, particularly in Europe, due to better employment opportunities.<sup>9</sup> This has led to skills shortages that the government has sought to address through recruitment of skilled expatriate and diaspora professionals. While there have been some attempts to engage diaspora expertise in certain sectors such as education, public health, and treatment of substance abuse, this has been the result of individual initiatives rather than as part of formal programmes.<sup>10</sup>

3 <http://www.nation.sc/articles/1082/president-launches-vision-2033-first-national-development-strategy-2019-2023> . The full text of Vision 2033 is available here: [http://www.finance.gov.sc/uploads/files/Vision\\_2033.pdf](http://www.finance.gov.sc/uploads/files/Vision_2033.pdf)

4 [http://www.finance.gov.sc/uploads/files/Seychelles\\_National\\_Development\\_Strategy\\_2019\\_2023\\_new.pdf](http://www.finance.gov.sc/uploads/files/Seychelles_National_Development_Strategy_2019_2023_new.pdf)

5 <http://www.employment.gov.sc/e-library/policies/labour-migration-policy-october-2019/download>

6 Ibid.

7 See <https://sey-int-rep-onw-prog.f> <http://sirop-cdu-alliance-snm.blogspot.com/2007/08/british-history-page-before-it-was.html> www.sayeu.org for more information

8 <http://www.nation.sc//articles/2698/president-danny-faures-fourth-press-conference-for-the-year-2019>

9 Philpot, Grey, and Stead (2015), 'Seychelles, a vulnerable or resilient SIDS? A local perspective', available at: [https://eprint.ncl.ac.uk/file\\_store/production/211285/DDD607DB-3C8A-4994-B3F2-669F67B12F92.pdf](https://eprint.ncl.ac.uk/file_store/production/211285/DDD607DB-3C8A-4994-B3F2-669F67B12F92.pdf)

10 Personal communication, GAFFI <https://www.gaffi.org/> and SACIDS [www.sacids.net](http://www.sacids.net) February 2019

As an island nation, Seychelles is particularly vulnerable to rising sea levels linked to climate change, a fact recognised by the country's Vision 2033 strategy. The strategy makes reference to the potential for climate-change induced emigration from the Seychelles by 2033, including a worst-case scenario of an 'exodus'. While Vision 2033 does not set out actions in this regard, Seychelles is working with other island states and their allies for greater advocacy and action to address climate change, and there may be scope to frame diaspora engagement policies and practices in relation to mitigating the effects of climate change.<sup>11</sup>

With the creation of a new diaspora unit in 2021, the government is giving more importance to the role and contribution of the diaspora in the country's socio-economic development, and it is expected to develop a national diaspora policy as it intensifies its diaspora engagement. The Government of Seychelles proposed the Diaspora Unit initiative within the Department of Foreign Affairs to give Seychellois nationals living abroad a means to participate in the socio-economic development of the island nation. As of January 2022, a total of 1,182 Seychellois emigrants registered with the diaspora unit.<sup>12</sup>

## Obstacles



- **Fragmented diaspora:** The Seychelles diaspora, although large relative to the total population, is small and spread across multiple countries and regions. There are very few Seychelles diaspora groups in Europe and North America.
- **Lack of strategic and policy focus:** Seychelles has not incorporated diaspora engagement into its policies and programmes until relatively recently, and so this policy area is at an early stage of development.
- **Lack of fiscal incentives:** Remittances flows to Seychelles are relatively modest, and the Seychelles diaspora is seen as lacking sufficient investment potential for policymakers to prioritise diaspora engagement policies and programmes.
- **Lack of trust:** A common diaspora perception of the government is that its policies have favoured expatriate investors and residents over the Seychellois. This has led to distrust of government policy towards the diaspora.<sup>13</sup> Conversely, one legacy of the political exiles in the 1980s is an ambivalence on the part of the government towards its diaspora in Europe, Australia, and Canada that remained until relatively recently. This has arguably slowed the development of diaspora engagement policy frameworks in the country.

<sup>11</sup> [http://www.finance.gov.sc/uploads/files/Vision\\_2033.pdf](http://www.finance.gov.sc/uploads/files/Vision_2033.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> [https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2023-07/sdg\\_seychelles\\_summary\\_of\\_findings.pdf](https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2023-07/sdg_seychelles_summary_of_findings.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> IOM 2014, *Migration in Seychelles: Country Report* available at: [https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/mp\\_seychelles\\_12aug2014.pdf](https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/mp_seychelles_12aug2014.pdf)



## SPOTLIGHT: effective practices

DIGITAL + DATA

### Seychelles Indian Diaspora day 2018

On 9 January 2018 the government celebrated Seychelles Indian Diaspora Day, honouring Indian diaspora business leaders based in the country as well as the contributions of the Seychellois of Indian origin worldwide to the Seychelles .<sup>14</sup>

CULTURE/ IDENTITY

### Diaspora eRegistration campaign<sup>15</sup>

The Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) has introduced an eRegister system which is a voluntary and free service to all Seychellois citizens who reside overseas. The data will be used to update DFA data of Seychellois Diasporas living in other communities outside Seychelles. Registration has attracted over one thousand contributions with responses showing a distinct interest in receiving information on areas to invest in. Fisheries and tourism were sectors that were particularly popular according to responses. Data showed that the majority of respondents were located in Europe, mainly in France, Belgium and the UK.

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.nation.sc/archive/257277/seychelles-indian-diaspora-day-2018>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.mfa.gov.sc/seychelles-citizens-diaspora>

## Annex:

# List of Actors

## Diaspora related institutions

- **At regional level**



**African Union Citizens and Diaspora Directorate (AU CIDO)** <https://au.int/en/cido>

Seychelles is a member of the African Union and nominates a diaspora focal point to represent Seychelles as part of the African Union Citizens and Diaspora Directorate (AU CIDO) Continental Meetings.

**Southern African Development Community (SADC)** <http://www.sadc.int/>

Seychelles is a member of the SADC which is an inter-governmental organization headquartered in Gaborone, Botswana. Its goal is to further socio-economic cooperation and integration as well as political and security cooperation among 16 southern African countries

**Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA)** <https://www.comesa.int/>

The Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa is a free trade area with twenty-one member states, including Seychelles.

- **At national level**

- At ministerial level

**Department of Foreign Affairs** <http://www.mfa.gov.sc/>

The Department for Foreign Affairs is responsible for relations with the Seychelles diaspora.

**Ministry of Employment, Immigration and Civil Status** <http://www.employment.gov.sc/#>

The Ministry of Employment, Immigration, and Civil Status is responsible for migration policies and programmes, and citizenship issues.

**Ministry of Finance, Trade and Economic Planning** <http://www.finance.gov.sc/>

The Ministry of Finance, Trade and Economic Planning is the lead agency for diaspora investment and trade

- Sub-ministerial level

**Diaspora unit 2021** <https://www.mfa.gov.sc/news/2257/notice-contact-details-of-diaspora-unit>

The Foreign Affairs Department established its first ever Diaspora Unit in 2021. The Diaspora Unit is responsible to engage and interact with Seychelles' nationals living abroad by facilitating their queries and providing them with necessary guidance, in connecting further with their homeland. The Unit recognizes the important role the Seychelles nationals living overseas can play in the socio-economic development of the country.

## Diaspora organisations in Europe



**Chagos Refugees Group UK** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/sabrinajeancrguk/>

This Chagossian diaspora organisation led the legal fight against the UK's government's treatment of Chagossians. It conducts lobbying and advocacy for Chagossian diaspora worldwide.

**Doctors 4 Doctors Seychelles** <https://www.facebook.com/D4DSey/posts/705554539938197>

### Development activities

Doctors 4 Doctors Seychelles is an independent association that draws on diaspora expertise with the purpose of advocating and promoting the interests of doctors, and improving medical care available in Seychelles.

**UK Chagos Support Association** <https://www.chagossupport.org.uk/>

### Development activities

The UK Chagos Support Association was formed to support the Chagossians in their fight for justice. It works to draw attention to the Chagos Islanders' plight, to help them in their struggle against injustice, and operates a hardship support fund for Chagossians in distress.

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