



THE OFFICIAL REPORT OF THE

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

COMMITTEE (EPIC)

OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY SERVICE

(2019-2023)

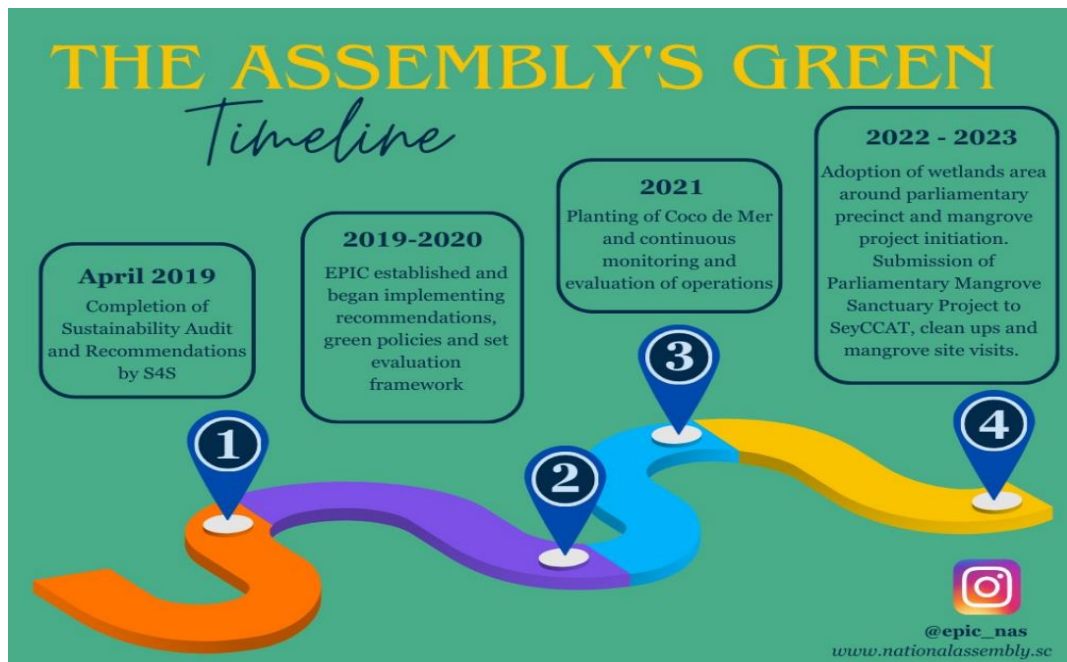
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Environmental Policy Implementation Committee (EPIC) was set up in the year 2020 following a month-long Sustainability Audit that was carried out in collaboration with the NGO - Sustainability for Seychelles (S4S) as part of an internal initiative in January 2019. This initiative embraced the challenge of improving the energy usage of the parliament whilst promoting environmental awareness.

The National Assembly was the first institution in Seychelles to have collaborated with a local NGO that has expertise in this area, and the audit provided the institution with a detailed report on the environmental impact of its daily operations. It also identified an action plan and recommendations on improvements that could be made in regards to energy, water and waste management. Following this, the National Assembly made a long-term commitment to reduce water and energy consumption and waste production. This was launched with the implementation of a sustainability policy and the EPIC.

The Members of the Committee serve on a voluntary basis and are considered as Eco-Ambassadors of the National Assembly Service. The Committee is responsible for monitoring and evaluating the National Assembly's progress in implementing different action plans to become a sustainable and environmentally friendly Parliament. The Committee is also tasked with implementing environmental policies, educating, and raising awareness of parliamentary staff on how they can lead sustainable lives as well as reporting annually on the improvements and missteps made by the institution.

This report will provide an overview of the actions implemented by the Committee and the projects being undertaken. In addition, the report will also put forth recommendations for the parliament to continue its green journey. The Members of the Committee are as follows: Ms. Alexandria Faure (Chairperson), Ms. Shannon Surman (Vice-Chairperson), Ms. Emma Didon (Secretary), Ms. Cosette Songoire (Co-ordinator), Mr. Daniel Rene, Mr. Jim David, Ms. Celine Bonne, Mr. Georges Ravignia, Mrs. Imaan Toulon, Mr. Vincent Quatre, Mr. Christopher Confait and Mrs. Gillian Samson.



1. INTRODUCTION

AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS & STATUS

The Audit Report by Sustainability for Seychelles (S4S) which was completed in April 2019 provided the below recommendations:

Energy:

1. That the air conditioning temperature should be increased from 21C to between 24 and 26c as a measure to save approximately 15% on the energy cost that is equivalent to 32,066kWhr.
2. That windows and doors are kept closed when air conditioners are operational.
3. Shading over glass windows is encouraged to be used on the east and west facing sides. of the building to increase the efficiency of the air conditioning units.
4. That the NAS purchase energy efficient appliances.
5. That the NAS switch to LED lights for lighting the building.

Water:

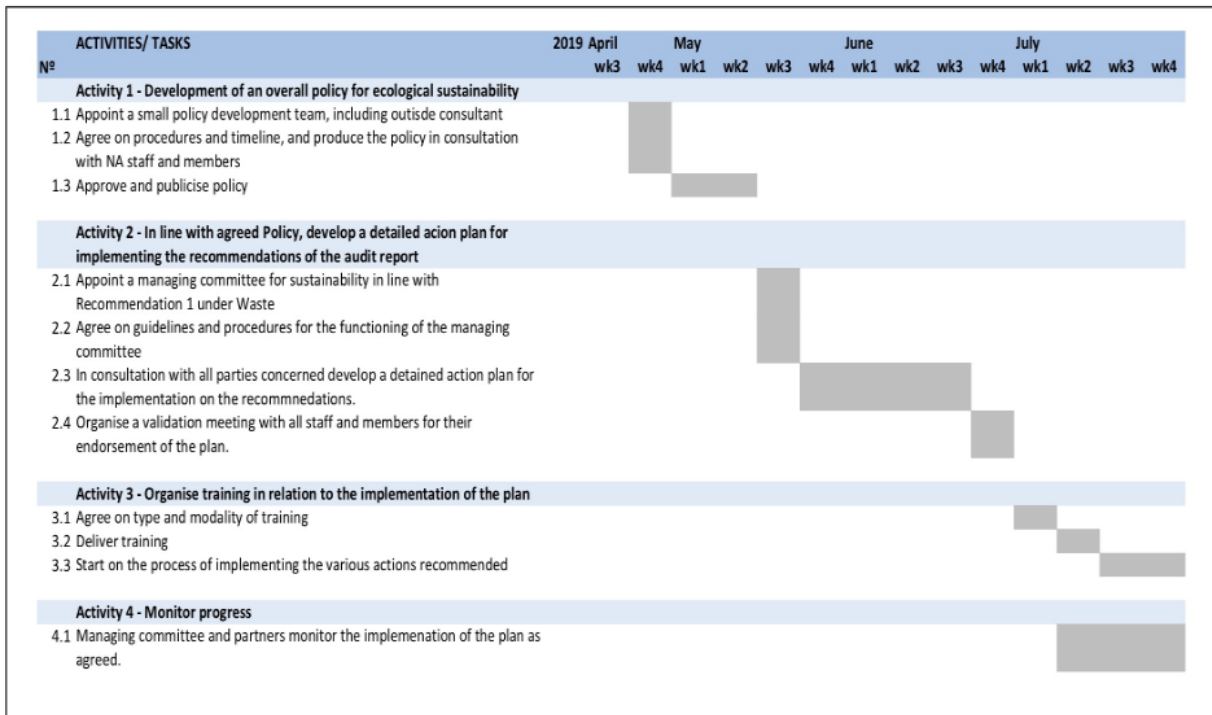
1. To avoid major leaks by carrying out regular checks once or twice a week. A reading taken in the evening when most staff are gone and another in the morning before staff return. With the difference in the readings notifying any possible leaks.
2. That a rainwater harvesting system be set up by connecting all the downpipes into one network that will take all the rainwater to a retention pond.
3. The installation of a hydrophore system for regulating water pressure and consisting of an intake and pump combined tank in the attic.

Waste:

1. A sustainable waste management policy and guidelines be drafted and implemented.
2. A sustainable practice manager be assigned to oversee all sustainable operations.
3. Reduce the use of paper and plastics by using electronic forms of communication and documentation, recycling food waste and reducing the use of chemicals.
4. Build 'musts' criteria encouraging sustainability in the NA's purchasing and procurement process.
5. Encourage waste separation and promote the principles of 'reduce, reuse, repair and recycle.'
6. Subscribe to e-newspaper to cut on waste and archiving space.
7. Amend the purchasing policy to favor environmentally friendly products.
8. Encourage carpooling and use of public transportation and encourage the purchase of low emission and energy efficient vehicles.
9. Increase cognizance of local legislation and ensure its operations are in line with regulations and policies.

Below are the actions plans which were proposed in the Report:

Figure 21 – Suggested Action plan



2. ACTIVITIES & IMPLEMENTATIONS OF 2020 -2023

2.1 ACTIVITIES & IMPLEMENTATIONS OF 2020

The Secretariat undertook several activities in 2020 which were aimed at implementing the most crucial and urgent recommendations found in the Report. These activities are detailed below and included the representation of staff from each unit:

2.1.1. **Drafting of Green Policies & Establishment of Tracking of Implementations**

The members of staff who met in 2020 after the audit results were released were first tasked with identifying the recommendations that could be implemented and with drafting green policies covering energy efficiency, green purchasing, water efficiency, waste management and an overarching sustainability policy. This was completed and shared with the Members and the Secretariat. The Committee was constituted and included staff from each unit. (See Annex 1 for the Sustainability Policy)

2.1.2. **Identification of Sustainable Practice Manager**

During the different stages of the drafting of green policies it was discussed that a Sustainable Practice/Monitoring Officer of the Committee should be nominated in order to ensure the work of the Committee continues and has an impact. Ms. Alexandria Faure was nominated by the Committee and proceeded to Chair the meetings of the Committee.

2.1.3. **Implementation and promotion of sharing documents Online (Reducing Paper Use)**

The Committee launched a campaign to assist the Secretariat with reducing the use of paper. It was approved by the Speaker that Order Papers and documents would be sent via email only and would not be printed. This included using WhatsApp and emails to share Committee documents. This included subscribing to the E-Newspapers and no longer purchasing the hard copy of the newspapers.

2.2 ACTIVITIES & IMPLEMENTATIONS OF 2021

EPIC undertook several activities in 2021. These activities detailed below, were particularly focused on implementing the low hanging fruits of the recommendations:

2.2.1. Endemic Species Audit of the Parliamentary Grounds by Dr Laboudallon & Dr Henriette



Dr. Victorin Laboudallon & Dr. Elvina Henriette visited the parliamentary precinct to analyze whether there are any endemic species and where the optimal areas would be to plant more endemic species. Ms. Alexandria Faure and the Sergeant at Arms, Mr. Antoine Rose, and Mr. Jim David were in attendance. The NAS Team discussed the methods required to prepare the grounds for the planting of the Coco De Mer and proper advice was provided by Dr. Laboudallon and Dr. Henriette to ensure its successful growth.

2.2.2. Planting of Coco de Mer in Commemoration of the International Day of Parliamentarism



On July 21st, 2021, the National Assembly commemorated the International Day of Parliamentarism in a special ceremony which included the planting of two 'Coco-de-mer' by the Speaker of the National Assembly, Hon. Roger Mancienne, the Deputy Speaker, Hon. Gervais Henrie, and the Deputy Clerk and Chairperson of EPIC, Ms. Alexandria Faure.





The planting of the 'Coco-de-mer' is in line with the National Assembly's aim of having more endemic plants on the compound. The success of the activity was contributed to by the Seychelles Islands Foundation (SIF) who donated the two 'Coco-de-mer' and the Terrestrial Restoration Action Society Seychelles (TRASS), who provided advice and guidance ensuring the proper care of the 'Coco-de-mer'.

Currently, the 'Coco-de-mer' is thriving as can be seen from the photo.

2.2.3. Planting of the 'Orkid Payanke'



In 2021, the National Assembly planted the 'Tropicbird Orchid', known in the creole language as 'Orkid Payanke'. The orchid is on the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red list of Threatened species.

The photos below show the Orchid in bloom in June of 2023:



2.3 ACTIVITIES & IMPLEMENTATIONS IN 2022

EPIC undertook several activities in 2022. These activities detailed below, were particularly focused on mangrove ecosystems:

2.3.1. Adoption of Wetlands Area in Commemoration of World Wetlands Day 2022



The National Assembly marked the first Wetlands Day on February 02nd 2022 by adopting the wetland area surrounding the National Assembly compound. The objectives of adopting the area are as follows:

- To manage and protect the area for future generations
- Reforest the area and transform it into a biodiversity hotspot
- To educate Members and staff on the importance of wetlands

2.3.2. Feature in Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Article

The National Assembly was featured in a Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) article entitled “*A Parliament for the planet: How the National Assembly of Seychelles transformed its approach to sustainability*”. The article described the beginning of the parliament’s sustainability audit, audit findings, targets and resulting action plans as well as the setup of EPIC.

2.3.3. Participation in Seychelles Eco-friendly & DIY Christmas Tree Competition 2022

EPIC and the Social Committee took part in the Seychelles Eco-friendly & DIY Christmas Tree Competition in December of 2022. Different materials were recycled into creative structures and decorations.



2.4 ACTIVITIES & IMPLEMENTATIONS OF 2023

EPIC undertook several activities in 2023 including clean ups, educational tours, planting activities, applying for a grant offered by the Seychelles Conservation and Climate Adaptation Trust (SEYCCAT), and setting up EPIC's social media page on 'Instagram'. These activities detailed below, were particularly focused on mangrove ecosystems:

2.4.1. World Wetlands Day Mangrove Cleanup at Cascade

EPIC's work for 2023 started off with a mangrove cleanup at Cascade in collaboration with Parley Seychelles, held on Saturday 4th of February 2023. The Cleanup was held in commemoration of World Wetlands Day.



2.4.2. Anse Royale Mangrove Cleanup



The Anse Royale Mangrove Cleanup, held in collaboration with Parley Seychelles, WildLife Clubs of Seychelles, and the Save our Seas Foundation was the second in the series of Cleanups in 2023. A total of 67 kg of trash was picked up within an hour of cleaning the area.

2.4.3. National Assembly Mangrove Cleanup



On the afternoon of Friday 23rd of June, the Environmental Policy Implementation Committee (EPIC) of the Secretariat, in collaboration with Parley Seychelles, organized a mangrove clean up and seedling harvesting activity in the area just behind the parliamentary building.

The clean-up activity involved Members of the National Assembly, including the Speaker Hon. Roger Mancienne, members of EPIC, passionate staff of the secretariat, and volunteers from Parley Seychelles. Everyone involved was

dedicated to ensuring that the area is free of debris and that a considerable number of seedlings were harvested for replanting in the very near future.

Shockingly, in such a small area, a total of 197.5kg of trash, 144kg of which was made up of plastic, was collected and safely disposed of. It is believed that not only is there littering taking place in and around the area, but that much of the debris is washing up and multiplying within the mangrove area with the tides over time. It is through clean-up activities like this that we all can take ownership of our environment and promote harmony between people and the planet.

Educational Tours

2.4.4. Tour of the Anse Royale Wetlands



Members of the Environmental Policy Implementation Committee (EPIC) joined Mr. Terence Vel at the University of Seychelles for an educative tour of the campus wetlands. EPIC is responsible for monitoring and evaluating the National Assembly's progress in implementing different action plans to become a more sustainable and environmentally friendly Parliament. The visit to UniSey began with a tour of the labs, where the members of EPIC learned more about the importance of mangrove ecosystems and the different projects currently

being undertaken. This followed with a hands-on opportunity where the committee was guided through the mangroves and engaged in mangrove planting and mangrove species identification. The visit was considered a thorough success, and EPIC will continue to work closely with Mr. Vel, UniSey, and other partners in order to kickstart various mangrove restoration projects.

2.4.5. Tour of the Ephelia Wetlands



The Environmental Policy Implementation Committee’s (EPIC) activities resumed on Thursday 20th July 2023, at the stunning Constance Ephelia Mangrove site. The visit formed part of EPIC’s aims to gain more knowledge and perspective regarding the management of mangrove areas. The Port Launay Wetlands, which amount to around 120 hectares, is a designated wetland of international importance under the RAMSAR convention. The Committee was guided through the very special site by the wonderful Ms. Hilary Albert of the Ephelia Green Team.

EPIC learned about the different elements of Ephelia’s mangrove project, which includes awareness raising through community engagement and school participation as well as the restoration and protection of mangroves. Activities of mangrove identification culminated in a short quiz based on the seven mangrove types observed during the walking tour. One of the highlights of the tour was learning of Ms. Albert’s “mangrove honey project”. As the only one of its kind in Seychelles, Ms. Albert’s project easily piqued the interest of eager EPIC members as she explained the differences of the mangrove honey compared to other types of honey, as well as its potential medicinal properties.

2.4.6. Public Relations Officers Tour of NAS



On Thursday 22nd June 2023, the EPIC hosted a tour of the Assembly precinct which was an opportunity for the Assembly to open its doors and educate those looking to make more sustainable and eco-friendly changes in their work environments. Jointly coordinating this educational visit was the Senior Public Relations Officer for the Ministry of Agriculture, Climate Change and Environment Mrs. Linne Dubignon, and the Public Relations and Protocol

Manager of the National Assembly Ms. Angelique Hill. The tour began outside the Assembly building, where EPIC Members Mr. Jim David and Mr. Daniel Rene demonstrated the conservation efforts undertaken by the committee, including the planting of endemic species such as the two coco-de-mers planted in 2021. The tour continued behind the National Assembly by Ms. Emma Didon and Mrs. Gillian Samson, where the adopted mangrove area was displayed.

The tour then moved into the Chamber, where visitors were given a talk by Ms. Celine Bonne and Mr. Georges Ravignia on the importance of eco-friendly purchasing and housekeeping policies. Then concluded the tour with a talk about how EPIC was formed, and how it will move into the future.

2.4.7. Planting Activities

On the 16th of September 2023, members of EPIC, assisted by Mr. Terence Vel conducted a mangrove planting activity at the National Assembly. There were nine participants and five different mangrove types planted in the wetland area at the site adjacent to ‘Gate One’ of the National Assembly compound. Seedlings were also planted in the mangrove nursery. This activity was conducted as part of EPIC’s Parliamentary Mangrove Project, with the aim of reforesting the mangrove area.



2.4.8. Application for SEYCCAT Grant

After proceeding to the Second Phase of the application process for SeyCCAT, the EPIC submitted a complete project proposal for the Mangrove project on the 29th of September 2023, which included the first stage of building the surrounding walkway and bridge for the sanctuary. EPIC received guidance from SEYCCAT in a meeting held on the 30th of August, prior to completing the project proposal for submission.



2.4.9. Meeting with Sustainability for Seychelles (S4S)



EPIC met with Sustainability for Seychelles (S4S), on Friday 8th September. The S4S delegation comprised of Mrs. Marie-Therese Purvis, Ms. Iris Carolus, and Mr. Laurent Sam. The aim of the meeting was to identify a way forward for conducting further sustainability and energy audits, as well as a carbon footprint assessment. Discussions were fruitful as the Committee gained clarity on how to proceed.

2.4.10. Feature Article in ‘Ozordi Dimans’

An article entitled ‘*Building a Greener Parliament: The Vital Role of the Environmental Policy Implementation Committee*’ was published on the 24th of September in the TODAY in Seychelles newspaper’s ‘Ozordi Dimans’ series. The article delved into the sustainability practices of the National Assembly, shining a light on the work and activities of EPIC.

2.4.11. Finalisation of the Terms of Reference

The EPIC met on 10th November 2023 and finalized its Terms of Reference, finally formalizing the Committee and ensuring its consistency and endurance as a Secretariat led Committee. (See Annex 2)

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

Recognizing the importance of promoting the National Assembly as a green parliament and in ensuring the consistency of sustainable practices in its operations, the Committee proposes the below recommendations:

Recommendation 1: Since the protection of the environment has been embedded in the strategic objectives of the National Assembly, the National Assembly Service should further consider making budgetary provisions for the Committee, its activities and action plans in a sustainable manner.

Recommendation 2: That the National Assembly Service consider drafting a cadre and scheme to subsequently employ a ‘Sustainable Practice Manager’ or ‘Environmental Officer’ to ensure the institution achieves its environmental objectives and action plans without further impeding on the workload of EPIC.

Recommendation 3: That Environmental protection and climate change sensitization training is included in the induction for the 8th Cohort of the National Assembly and for new Parliamentary Staff.

Recommendation 4: Further Parliamentary action and involvement is taken to push for more cohesive and effective national waste management procedures and processes.

ANNEX 1

Environment Sustainability Policy

Vision

To become a leader in environmental performance best practice, and to embed sustainability into the heart of our operations.

Aim

Protect the environment by minimising pollution and resource consumption, and supporting and encouraging biodiversity. Drive continual improvement of our environmental performance in terms of energy consumption and waste minimisation.

Objectives

We will:

- Ensure all Secretariat Staff, Members of the National Assembly and other building users fully understand the contribution they can make to improving our environmental performance;
- Mitigate against climate change by measuring and reducing the National Assembly's carbon footprint;
- Adopt a strategy for managing the energy consumption of the National Assembly incorporating energy efficiency, efficient technology and on site renewables.
- Manage water efficiently;
- Safeguard resources by minimizing waste and identifying ways to reduce, reuse, repair and recycle materials;
- Purchase in an environmentally conscious and responsible manner
- Support and encourage biodiversity within the parliamentary grounds
- Comply with environmental legislations, regulations and policies of Seychelles
- Address climate change through promoting legislations that encourage good practice pertaining to sustainability.
- Implement an annual environmental sustainability improvement plan.

The sustainability performance of all departments and the effectiveness of their improvement plans will be regularly monitored and reviewed. Independent assessments of annual environmental performance will be carried out. An annual management review will be provided to the National Assembly **Environmental Policy Implementation Committee** and performance information will be made publicly available. Revisions to the policy statement will be submitted to the Clerk of the National Assembly for approval.

All National Assembly managers are responsible for environmental management in their areas of responsibility. It is expected that all staff will follow the principles of the policy statement to assist in meeting the sustainability commitments made in the policy statement.

ANNEX 2

Terms of Reference of the Environmental Policy Implementation Committee (EPIC)

The EPIC is mandated to:

- Assist with drafting and implementing green policies, including the monitoring of their implementations bi-annually. including strategies for measuring and reducing the National Assembly's carbon footprint.
- Assist with ensuring all Secretariat Staff, Members of the National Assembly and other building users fully understand the contribution they can make to improving the environmental performance of the National Assembly.
- Assist with introducing and enforcing policies and actions that safeguard resources by minimizing waste and identifying ways to reduce, reuse, repair and recycle materials.
- Ensure policies and strategies are implemented to purchase in an environmentally conscious and responsible manner in areas such as energy and water efficiency.
- Ensure the continuity of the Parliamentary Mangrove Sanctuary Project.
- Introduce, manage and implement projects and activities that support and encourage the biodiversity of the parliamentary grounds, increase the water and energy efficiency of the institution, environmental protection and promote climate adaption and climate change mitigation.
- Promote the Parliament as a Green Parliament and work with stakeholders and civil society in addressing environmental protection and climate change.
- Be eco ambassadors as Parliamentary Staff of the Assembly.
- Provide a bi-annual management review to the National Assembly and performance information will be made publicly available.
- The Committee may make revisions to the sustainability policy statement, every 5 years, subject to the approval of the Clerk of the National Assembly.

Composition and Roles of the Committee

- The Committee shall consist of a maximum of 15 Members due to its operational and technical requirements, and to ensure that a diverse number of staff have the opportunity to get involved and become a Member of the Committee.
- The Committee shall elect its own Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson as per Rule 5 of the Rules of Procedures for Committees of the National Assembly, both shall serve a term of 5 years.
- The Committee shall meet at least once a month and when required for the efficient implementation of its mandate.
- There shall be a Secretary to the Committee of whom shall be tasked with keeping the records, drafting the minutes of meetings, and communicating committee related information to all its Members. The Secretary shall be appointed by the Committee.
- There shall be a Coordinator to the Committee of whom shall be tasked with organizing the activities of the Committee and keeping all relevant databases as and when required.
- The Committee shall resolve to assign tasks to different Members to allow for shared responsibilities, empowerment and the necessary implementation of action plans.