Mid-Term Review of the Twenty22 Strategy of Seychelles Conservation and Climate Adaptation Trust (SeyCCAT)

FINAL REPORT
Independent review conducted by Peter Mills
June – August 2021
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Executive Summary

Seychelles Conservation and Climate Adaptation Trust (SeyCCAT), is a Conservation Trust Fund (CTF) established as an independent public-private trust, governed by the Conservation and Climate Adaptation Trust Act (2015). SeyCCAT was created through the world’s first multi-lateral debt restructuring deal (US$21.6m) that committed Seychelles to a time-bound marine conservation policy commitment through a national marine spatial planning process (MSP).

SeyCCAT’s work is guided by its Strategic Plan: Twenty22. This document outlines SeyCCAT’s Vision, Mission, Goal, and Strategic Objectives for the period 2018-2022. The objective of this Mid-Term Review (MTR) was to undertake a thorough assessment of the how the Strategic Plan: Twenty22 has been operationalized and implemented in the first half of the strategy period, from its launch in 2018 up until the end of 2020.

Data collection was guided by an evaluation matrix based on the review questions described in Annex 1. These review questions were developed with SeyCCAT’s executive team during commissioning. The MTR used a mixed methods approach to data collection utilizing stakeholder analysis, content review, Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), followed by data analysis, SWOT analysis and validation of findings.

Since 2017 SeyCCAT has effectively and consistently delivered the Blue Grants Fund (BGF), and in doing so has become established as a key donor for environmental projects in the Seychelles and is well known at the national level. Up to the end of 2020, four competitive calls for proposals had been issued under the BGF, and 45 projects funded. The primary organisational goal of disbursing $750,000 per annum was reached by SeyCCAT in 2019 when $815,900 was disbursed through 20 BGF projects, with an additional $45,000 disbursed in support of 7 research projects.

Although 2020 saw a reduction in the value of funds disbursed compared to 2019, in 2021 SeyCCAT expects to disburse £1.28m in support of strategic objectives.

In total, through rounds 1-4 of the BGF, SeyCCAT has disbursed $1,880,752 ($25,390,149 SCR). The 45 projects funded have cumulatively leveraged an additional $2,706,030 (36,531,410 SCR) in co-financing from partner organisations.

SeyCCAT has become established within the Seychelles as an active, operational Trust Fund with procedures and processes in place that allow it to function and deliver on its core mandate of managing the BGF. The organisation is highly respected by stakeholders and partners in the conservation and climate change sectors, for the professionalism it has exhibited in delivering the BGF and the standards that it has set in doing so.

The strong reputation that the organisation has built is reflected in its success in attracting resources to support strategic objectives. SeyCCAT has recently secured $5.3m from international donors in support of MSP implementation, Blue Carbon and NDCs. The success in delivery of objectives and in resource mobilization is allowing the organisation to grow from an original staff complement of 1.5 to 10 staff by late 2021.

This review found that various factors contribute to SeyCCAT’s ability to achieve results. The Government of Seychelles commitment to the debt swap and the Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) process, has been key to the organisation’s success. SeyCCAT’s strong reputation at the national and international level owes much to the commitment and hard work of its staff, and their ability and willingness to work with and listen to people, which in turn has enabled the development of trust between SeyCCAT, it’s Board, and its stakeholders. SeyCCAT’s three governance structures (Board of Governors, a Blue Grants Committee, and a Finance
Committee) have supported the consistent and transparent delivery of the BGF.

Grants from The Nature Conservancy (TNC) in 2018 and 2020 have been key to bridging an operational shortfall, and the organisation has also positively benefited from support of partners such as SWIOFish3 in funding communications work, and the development of tools that support the roll-out of BGF, and capacity building of grantees. The success that SeyCCAT has had in securing additional financial support has been supported by the existence of professional relationships between the CEO and donors that either already existed or which have been developed by the CEO during her tenure.

The BGF targets five stakeholder groups: locally registered NGOs, businesses, parastatal organisations, government departments or agencies, and Seychellois citizens. Despite the success so far in promoting and delivering the BGF, the fund does suffer from a lack of diversity in the number of applicants, and grantees from different eligible groups. Across rounds 1–4, most grantees primarily come from two of the five eligible groups, NGOs and citizens, and projects led by these two groups account for 80% of all funded projects. The BGF is underachieving in support of the other three groups of eligible grantees.

Early data on the type of projects funded under the BGF has begun to indicate some weaknesses, for example research projects that individually have value, but which do not contribute to a broader research strategy, and limited innovation in some areas. In achieving its targets, SeyCCAT is dependent on national capacity to design and deliver innovative projects in key areas, in particular MPA management and climate change adaptation. National capacity for this, and to absorb funding was identified is a potential weakness. SeyCCAT, with the support of partners, has invested in strengthening the capacity of grantees to both develop project ideas, and to manage and monitor these projects. This work should continue to be a priority, alongside disbursing funding.

Since early 2020, the most significant external factor to have affected SeyCCAT is the global COVID-19 pandemic. Travel restrictions have limited access to project sites by grantees and will contribute to data gaps in projects. Limits on international travel have led to a reduction in funding for conservation work generated by payment of park entrance fees. The requirement for social distancing has reduced the ability of SeyCCAT staff to work together at a time when the organisation is growing and hiring new team members, and SeyCCAT has been limited in its ability to engage in face-to-face meetings with members of the new government.

Through delivery of the BGF SeyCCAT has provided a route for funding for many local organisations and citizens. In doing so it has created opportunities for organisations who may not be able to access funds through other routes, for example the Praslin Fishers’ Association. It has also provided grants to a significant number of the Seychelles environmental NGOs. The successful growth of the BGF has been positively influenced by the efforts of SeyCCAT staff to understand the needs of stakeholders, and work with them to facilitate the application process.

SeyCCAT consults with national stakeholder organisations when defining the objectives of each round of the BGF. For each funding round, a Request for Proposals (RfP) is launched identifying priority areas in which projects are sought. Decisions regarding the content of each RFP are guided by the Blue Grants Committee, whose members include representatives from government, national and international NGOs, businesses, and parastatals. These consultations provide a mechanism to ensure that stakeholder priorities sit at the heart of each BGF funding round.
By delivering the BGF, the organisation has provided one mechanism by which the Government of Seychelles can demonstrate its commitment to the terms of the debt swap deal and the funding of marine conservation work. Working with partners and building in previous research work, SeyCCAT has enabled development of the science of seagrass in the Seychelles at a level that has national significance with regard to Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).

Since its launch in 2017, the BGF has funded a wide range of projects responsive to stakeholder and organisational priorities in areas including the fisheries sector, support to new and existing marine and coastal protected areas, tackling and removing plastic waste pollution, research into vulnerable species, communication and education projects, coastal mapping and monitoring, and wetland and mangrove rehabilitation.

Despite its success, climate change adaptation and waste management are two areas in which SeyCCAT has not been effective in the first three years of the strategy. Stakeholders and SeyCCAT identified climate change adaptation as an area that requires increased investment and a greater presence by the organisation.

In the Blue Economy (BE), the BGF has funded training and development of BE entrepreneurs and development of BE concepts and businesses. In delivering outcomes in this area, two key challenges exist. The first is that the Blue Economy is a loosely defined term, both in the Seychelles and globally, and the second is that SeyCCAT’s role in supporting BE for-profit business development is not formally identified in the Act of Government that governs the organisation’s work. SeyCCAT has the opportunity to support exploration of what the Sustainable Blue Economy means for the Seychelles. This is a legitimate area of interest for the organisation, but it’s role in this area may need to be formalised.

While the BGF is responsive to stakeholder priorities, it is unclear whether the BGF projects contribute to filling knowledge gaps for national priorities such as MSP implementation. An opportunity exists to use the BGF in a more strategic way to fund high quality research, that provides data for initiatives such as MPA management. In aligning the BGF with such a high-level target, SeyCCAT would need to consider engaging national stakeholders and technical experts in developing a research strategy or identifying a portfolio of example projects that grantees could deliver.

**SeyCCAT’s Strategic Objectives (SO)**

| SO1 | Support new and existing marine and coastal protected areas and sustainable use zones |
| SO2 | Empower the fisheries sector with robust science and knowhow to improve governance, sustainability, value, and market options |
| SO3 | Promote the rehabilitation of marine and coastal habitats and ecosystems that have been degraded by local and global impacts |
| SO4 | Develop and implement risk reduction and social resilience plans to adapt to the effects of climate change |
| SO5 | Trial and nurture business models to secure the sustainable development of Seychelles Blue Economy |

Analysis of data from for rounds 1-4 of the BGF shows that SeyCCAT’s Strategic Objectives (SO) have not been equally targeted. 90% of funded projects have focussed on strategic objectives 1, 2 and 5 (14,
15 and 12 projects respectively). SO3 and SO4 only have two BGF projects each prioritizing these areas. Projects that prioritize SO 1, 2 and 5 have received 36%, 29% and 30% respectively of BGF funds disbursed to date. Projects prioritizing SO3 have received 4% of funds disbursed to date and projects prioritizing SO4 have received just 1% of BGF funds disbursed to date.

This picture can be explained by the large contribution of Blue Bond proceeds towards capitalization of the BGF, and the requirement for these funds to prioritize achievement of SO 1, 2 and 5. The significance of the variance in funding levels between SO 1, 2 and 5 and SO 3 and 4 is still perhaps unexpected.

The Twenty22 Strategy document lists a number of priority investments that sit within each SO. For each BGF round, SeyCCAT produces a Request for Proposals (RfP) that describes the priority investments SeyCCAT aims to fund, and therefore what type of activities may be eligible for funding. Analysis of the RfP’s for rounds 1-4 highlighted inconsistencies in the way priority investments are described and targeted.

This review did not identify any evidence that SeyCCAT’s strategic objectives should be changed, but greater consideration needs to be given to equal targeting of the five areas, and to more succinct identification and communication of priority investments.

SeyCCAT deserves credit for having established a robust application process for the BGF, undertaking a high-level of due diligence of applicants accepted for funding, and demonstrating a high level of professionalism and transparency in the rolling out the fund. Existing efficiencies in SeyCCAT’s work include clear accountability mechanisms, strategic use of limited resources, strong in-house staff knowledge and expertise and BGF committee expertise, and a focus on capacity development of grantees.

There is an opportunity further strengthen the strategic approach of the BGF by either extending the application window or communicating ahead of the application window the SOs and priority investments to be targeted by a BGF round. This would allow applicants more time to develop projects in line with the eligible activities described in the RfP, which may strengthen the quality and breadth of applications.

SeyCCAT has had undoubted success in rolling out the BGF, and in mobilising funding for other projects but the efficiency of its work in these areas could be improved by engaging increased technical capacity to develop project ideas, both for the BGF, and for larger projects where SeyCCAT acts as the broker or fund manager. Currently the level of effort required by the CEO in support of resource mobilization is an inefficient use of their time. It is worth highlighting that presently a large amount of institutional knowledge and relationships, are concentrated in the role of the CEO. The CEO is hugely respected for their leadership of the organisation, but the Board should consider whether a sustainability plan is needed in case of absence (e.g.: through illness, a heightened risk during a global pandemic) or succession

SeyCCAT is a successful organisation, that is potentially approaching a pivotal stage in its development. With growth in funding and growth in an organisation’s portfolio there comes an increased requirement for administration and management. Growth in size and staff numbers also entails requirements to induct new staff, to manage performance, and maintain the working environment and culture. These are two challenges that SeyCCAT faces.

SeyCCAT’s Blue Grants Committee plays an integral role in oversight of the BGF project.
portfolio. The existence of this committee provides an accountability mechanism to ensure that projects are aligned with the organisation’s strategy and goals. The committee would benefit from the ability to access more expert technical capacity, and its efficiency could be improved by identifying an alternative accountability mechanism for approving BGF budget line changes, responsibility for which currently sits with the committee.

With funding support from the Government of Seychelles, SeyCCAT has been able to recruit an in-house M&E Officer. This post previously did not exist in the organisation and the recruitment represents a significant capacity gain. With support from the SWIOFish3 project, SeyCCAT has been able to fund the development of an organisational Results Framework that strengthens its ability to measure, and talk about, the impact of its work.

Currently, all SeyCCAT projects are able to meet their requirements for external reporting to donors, and no major challenges have been encountered with reporting by BGF grantees. With support from SWIOFish3, SeyCCAT has recently strengthened M&E processes in the BGF, embedding results-based M&E in the application and reporting processes.

SeyCCAT has developed institutional partnerships with Seychelles Government, SWIOFish3, Pew Charitable Trusts, The Nature Conservancy, Blue Nature Alliance, Oceans 5, Nekton and Trois Freres in support of delivery of strategic objectives. Potential partnerships that may further strengthen delivery include those with international technical partners, a wider range of government departments and parastatals, and with the national fishing and tourism industries.

This review did not identify any instances of duplication between BGF projects, or between SeyCCAT’s work and that of other organisations working the same national space. SeyCCAT’s mandate is designed to align with that of its stakeholders, and so there is inevitably overlap in their areas of work. SeyCCAT has received some criticism for accessing grant funding and the organisation needs to be aware of the risk of being seen as a competitor to national NGOs, especially in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic where financial resources available to these organisations have diminished. The organisation has proved itself capable of attracting external funding and bringing this funding into the national conservation and Blue Economy sectors and it occupies a space where it could effectively act as a broker for international funding, and funnel this to national implementing agencies.

This review identified 17 recommendations. These are described on page 45.
Introduction to SeyCCAT

Seychelles Conservation and Climate Adaptation Trust (SeyCCAT), is a Conservation Trust Fund (CTF) established as an independent public-private trust, governed by the Conservation and Climate Adaptation Trust Act (2015). SeyCCAT was created through the world’s first multi-lateral debt restructuring deal (US$21.6m) that committed Seychelles to a time-bound marine conservation policy commitment through a national marine spatial planning process (MSP). SeyCCAT’s work is guided by its Strategic Plan: Twenty22. This document outlines SeyCCAT’s Vision, Mission, Goal, and Strategic Objectives for the period 2018-2022.

Vision: SeyCCAT envisions for Seychelles oceans and islands to be stewarded by the people of Seychelles, generating sustainable benefits for future generations to share.

Mission: SeyCCAT strategically invests in ocean stakeholders to generate new learning, bold action, and sustainable blue prosperity in Seychelles.

Goal: To competitively disburse at least US$750,000 per annum to support the stewardship of Seychelles’ ocean resources, island life and blue economy.

Objective of the Mid-Term Review

The objective of this Mid-Term Review (MTR) was to undertake a thorough assessment of the how SeyCCAT’s Strategic Plan: Twenty22 has been operationalized and implemented in the first half of the strategy period, from its launch in 2018 up until the end of 2020. The review aimed to:

- Identify key results that have been achieved in this period, assess progress towards the goal, mission and strategic objectives outlined in the Twenty22 document, and identify both good practice and any constraints and their implications.
- Provide a picture of the strengths and weaknesses of SeyCCAT’s systems and processes and provide actionable recommendations that can be used to strengthen delivery of the strategy in the period 2021-2022.
- Understand how trends in the national and international environment have influenced delivery of the strategy and how SeyCCAT has worked with partners to deliver results.

Figure 1: SeyCCAT’s five Strategic Objectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SO</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SO1</td>
<td>Support new and existing marine and coastal protected areas and sustainable use zones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SO2</td>
<td>Empower the fisheries sector with robust science and knowhow to improve governance, sustainability, value, and market options</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SO3</td>
<td>Promote the rehabilitation of marine and coastal habitats and ecosystems that have been degraded by local and global impacts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SO4</td>
<td>Develop and implement risk reduction and social resilience plans to adapt to the effects of climate change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SO5</td>
<td>Trial and nurture business models to secure the sustainable development of Seychelles Blue Economy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Methods and approach

Data collection was guided by an evaluation matrix based on the review questions described in Annex 1. These review questions
were developed with SeyCCAT’s executive team during commissioning of this review.

The MTR used a mixed methods approach to data collection. The following methods were used:

**Stakeholder analysis**: to identify suitable stakeholders who could provide feedback on SeyCCAT’s work via Key Informant Interview.

**Content review**
A review of the content of core documentation relating to SeyCCAT and its work formed the foundation of the methods for the MTR. A list of all documents reviewed can be found in Annex 2.

**Key informant Interviews (KII)s**
Key informant interviews were be used to gather in-depth information from stakeholders and enable triangulation of emerging themes and recommendations. A list of stakeholders interviewed can be found in Annex 3.

**SWOT Analysis** to update the SWOT analysis present in the Twenty22 Strategy document, and to evaluate the current internal and external environment in which SeyCCAT operates

**Data analysis** of information gathered began with familiarization with the data by listening to interviewees and respondents, transcribing organizing notes and determining which pieces of data have value. Coding of data allowed identification of themes and the opportunity to triangulate findings, explore relationships and note patterns in the data. Interpretation of data enabled the identification of tangible results and common challenges or constraints, and the structuring of findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

**Validation of findings**: Initial validation of findings and analysis took place with SeyCCAT’s CEO.

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**Findings and Analysis**

1: SeyCCAT’s effectiveness in achieving the objectives of the Twenty22 strategy

**Organisational goals**
The primary goal set-out in the SeyCCAT Strategic Plan: Twenty22, is to competitively disburse $700,000 per annum to support the stewardship of Seychelles’ ocean resources, island life and blue economy. The primary mechanism used by SeyCCAT to disburse funds in support of this goal is the Blue Grants Fund (BGF). Since 2017 SeyCCAT has effectively and consistently delivered the BGF. Up to the end of 2020, four competitive calls for proposals had been issued under the BGF, and 45 projects funded.

The goal of disbursing $750,000 per annum was reached by SeyCCAT following BGF round 3, which disbursed $815,900 in 2019, in support of 20 individual projects. In 2019 SeyCCAT disbursed an additional $45,000 for 7 ocean research projects through the Deep Blue Grants Fund, in partnership with the Nekton Foundation, bringing the total funding competitively disbursed in 2019 to $860,900.

BGF round 4 saw a reduction in the value of funds disbursed compared to BGF 3. Although a record number of applications were received, a high number fell short of funding due to issues such as lack of alignment with SOs, weak methodology and budgeting, and failure to demonstrate options for co-financing and partnership. Some large grant applicants did not proceed their applications to the second round, due to lack of time to
develop their proposals, other commitments taking priority, and inability to match their business needs with SeyCCAT’s partnership requirements. COVID-19 also negatively impacted BGF#4 and other areas of SeyCCAT’s work as described further on. BGF round 5 was launched in early 2021 and is estimated to disburse $1,285,133 in funding to 17 projects.

Alongside disbursing a total of $1,880,752 ($25,390,149 SCR) through rounds 1-4, the 45 projects funded under the BGF have cumulatively leveraged an additional $2,706,030 (36,531,410 SCR) in co-financing from partner organisations. 15% of this co-financing is cash, including $45,000 co-financing of the Deep Blue Grants Fund by the Nekton Foundation. The other 85% is composed of in-kind contributions from businesses, academic organisations, NGOs, government bodies and individual citizens.

The success of the BGF has been key to SeyCCAT achieving its annual target for disbursing funding in 2019. Under rounds 1-4 of, two categories of grants were issued to successful applicants. Small grants with a funding ceiling of SCR 100,000 and a maximum duration of one year, and large grants with a funding ceiling of SCR 1m, and a duration of up to two years. The number of grants issued under the BGF grew from rounds 1 to 3, and then reduced slightly under BGF#4. Under round 5 (2021), a third grant category has been added with a funding ceiling of SCR 2m and a maximum duration of 2 years. It is estimated a further 17 projects will be funded under round 5.

To meet the eligibility criteria for the BGF, applicants must fall into one of five categories1, and have been legally present and/or operational in the Seychelles for at least one year.

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1 Locally registered NGO, Business, Parastatal organisations, Government departments or agencies, Seychelles Citizens.

* Estimated.
National NGOs and citizens have received the majority of funding disbursed under the BGF. The number of local NGOs and Seychellois citizens who are grantees is the same (18), and the variance in the value of funding disbursed to these two categories can be accounted for by the fact a greater number of grants to local NGOs were large (14) rather than (4), compared to citizens large grants (8), small grants (10). From rounds 1-4, five large grants went to the business sector, while government agencies were granted three grants (2 large, 1 small). One parastatal agency was granted a large grant.

Organisational effectiveness
Delivering an ambitious strategy requires having an organisation that functions effectively, with committed staff, strong procedures, and supportive stakeholders. SeyCCAT is a good example of such an organisation. Since its launch it has become established within the Seychelles as an active, operational Trust Fund with procedures and processes in place that allow it to function and deliver on its core mandate of managing the BGF. Stakeholder feedback was unanimous, SeyCCAT is highly respected at both the national and international level, by stakeholders and partners in the conservation and climate change sectors, for the professionalism it has exhibited in delivering the BGF and the standards that it has set in doing so, for results it is delivering on other projects, and for its publicity and communications work. The organisation has become established as a key donor for environmental projects in the Seychelles and through its publicity and sensitization work is well known at the national level.

Resource mobilization
Strategic targets also include investing 35% of the total debt swap proceeds in the Blue Endowment Fund (to provide financing for conservation and climate adaptation projects from 2036 onwards when the debt swap expires), and to double the endowment asset. In 2018, SeyCCAT, with the support and advice of its Finance Committee, hired an investment manager. Administrative challenges caused delays to the initial investment being made but as of 2020, $610,000 has been invested in funds that are expected to return at or above the 7% rate targeted under SeyCCAT’s investment policy. 90% of the investment has been made in ESG screened funds, with 10% invested in local treasury bills. In addition to the roles played by the Finance Committee and investment manager, SeyCCAT staff are credited with helping identify relevant local treasury bill investments.
A further strategic goal is to boost distributable assets to $1.1m per annum, and to double the endowment asset. While this review did not receive information regarding increases in the endowment asset, other fundraising achievements are clear. The strong reputation that the organisation has built is reflected in its success in attracting additional resources to support strategic objectives. In 2020, SeyCCAT negotiated a grant agreement with Pew Charitable Trust for $609,000 to finance the Coastal Wetlands and Climate Change (CWCC) project, complemented by additional funding of $450,000 channelled through the project’s scientific partner, the University of Oxford, UK. In 2021 SeyCCAT signed a grant agreement with the international donors collaborative Oceans5 for $900,000 to be used to support the development, implementation, and adaptive management of the Seychelles Marine Spatial Plan. Both of these projects partner with local NGO and academic organisations in the delivery of objectives. SeyCCAT has also successfully mobilised $2.3m in funding from the Blue Nature Alliance, and a further $1.5m from the Nature Conservancy’s Scale Up Fund in support of implementation of the Marine Spatial Plan. 2021 has also seen SeyCCAT secure its first example of funding from a Seychellois business to support the BGF. The Trois Freres distillery will provide a grant of SCR150,000 to a successful BGF applicant looking to establish or develop a sustainable Blue Business and will provide mentorship. SeyCCAT also has a significant pipeline of further funding that is expected to be secured, potentially bringing in an additional $5m to fund strategic objectives.

This success is resource mobilization is contributing to the organisation’s ability to grow. Having started with a staff complement of 1.5, a CEO and a part-time Executive Assistant, SeyCCAT now additionally employs a Blue Grants Coordinator, M&E Officer, Project Manager for the Coastal Wetlands and Climate Change (CWCC) project, and Project Manager for the Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) process (seconded to TNC), and the Executive Assistant role is full-time. In 2021, success in attracting funding will enable recruitment of additional further posts including Grants Manager, Grants and Fundraising Assistant, Project Coordinator, and a Fundraising and Partnerships Manager.
Strategic Commissions
The Twenty22 strategy document identifies a number of priority strategic commissions, designed to fill gaps in SeyCCAT’s knowledge base, or support stakeholders with specific capacity issues. The first 3 years of strategy implementation have seen good progress in these areas:

- **A Willingness to Pay** study was commissioned to identify options for tourism conservation/waste management fees. Results showed that 80% of visitors would be willing to pay an environmental fee as part of the Seychelles exit fee of between $10 and $40 dollars. SeyCCAT plans to advocate for a mechanism for payment of US$ 10-20 per tourist; with 1/3 of proceeds to be managed by SeyCCAT.

- SeyCCAT has commissioned a consultancy firm, Starling Resources, to develop a five-year business plan for the organisation that identifies routes to financial sustainability post 2022; MPA financing plans for two MPAs developed under the MSP; and to design one Blue Finance Project, connecting Blue Finance to MPA management.

- Early-stage work was completed in 2019 to assess the feasibility of a Blue Enterprise Fund. A study completed by Conservation Capital indicated that this was not a viable financial mechanism to support the growth of the Blue Economy in the current context.

- With financial support from SWIOFish3, SeyCCAT has conducted media and communications campaign activities to raise awareness of the processes for applying for BGF funding. Support from SWIOFish3 has also enabled capacity building of BGF applicants.

Other priority strategic commissions listed in the Twenty22 strategy document include conducting data and gap needs analysis for implementation of the MSP, articulating ideas for Blue Economy projects, and studying economic diversification opportunities for fishers and associated workers. Findings described further on in this report highlight the continued relevance of these areas of work, and the opportunity SeyCCAT currently has for pursuing these particular commissions.

This review found that various factors contribute to SeyCCAT’s ability to achieve results:

**Political support**
Political will has had a substantial positive impact. The Government of Seychelles commitment to the debt swap and Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) process, and by extension the objectives of SeyCCAT has been key to the organisation’s success. This support creates the environment at the national level where SeyCCAT is able to operate freely in delivering the Blue Grants Fund. At the international level, this political commitment has been key to the success seen in attracting more international funding from donors such as Pew Charitable Trusts and Oceans 5.

The recent change in government in the Seychelles following the 2020 elections creates the need for SeyCCAT to communicate its role to a new administration, an activity which is made more difficult by the challenges that the COVID-19 pandemic has brought to holding in person meetings.

**SeyCCAT staff**
SeyCCAT’s strong reputation at the national and international level owes much to the commitment and hard work of its staff, and
their ability and willingness to work with and listen to people, which in turn has enabled the development of trust between SeyCCAT, it’s Board, and its stakeholders. The growth in the BGF is in part due to the willingness of SeyCCAT staff to actively engage with and support applicants through the proposal development process. Partners and stakeholders speak highly of the professionalism and transparency shown by organisation’s staff and leadership. Allied to this, having a CEO Seychellois origin, who has the respect and trust of peers and stakeholders has had a significant positive influence on the organisation’s ability to achieve results.

With growth in the organisation, a challenge going forward will be to ensure that as the organisation’s staff complement grows, it maintains the strong internal work ethic and commitment to its goals, and externally maintains and grows its reputation as a trusted and effective partner.

Supportive governance
SeyCCAT is supported by three governance structures, a Board of Governors, a Blue Grants Committee, and a Finance Committee. These structures, and the decision-making processes delegated to them, for example the role of the BGF committee in reviewing and recommending BGF applications, and the role of the Board in approving applications, have supported the consistent and transparent delivery of the BGF. Supportive governance structures, with members who have been willing to apply their skills and time to the organisation has been a positive factor in SeyCCAT’s successes to date.

Looking ahead, there is an opportunity to ensure that the functions and decision-making roles of each governance structure, are still relevant to an organisation with increased personnel and internal capacity, and an increased portfolio of work, this is discussed further on. Consideration could also be given to the make-up of the Board and equal representation of all stakeholder groups. To date the Board of Governors has consisted of 80% male members, and in terms of make-up across SeyCCAT’s stakeholders, 46% of current or previous Board members have been Government officials and 29% have come from the business sector. 21% have come from national international NGOs and just 4% from national parastatal organisations.

Donor and partner support
Another positive factor in the first few years of SeyCCAT’s development has been financial support of donor organisations and partners for operational costs. Grants from The Nature Conservancy (TNC) in 2018 and 2020 have been key to bridging an operational shortfall.
SeyCCAT has also positively benefited from support of partners such as SWIOFish3 in funding communications work, and the development of tools that support the roll-out of BGF, such as the ‘Project Planning and Business Development Manual for Small Scale Fishers’, Monitoring and & Evaluation capacity building for prospective grantees, and the
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development of organisational level Results Framework. Identifying a sustainable source of funding to support the organisation’s operational costs has already been recognised as a challenge that requires resolution, and SeyCCAT has been successful in sourcing short-term funding for development of a Business Plan, that includes identification a pathway for financial sustainability post 2022.

The success that SeyCCAT has had in securing additional financial support through grant funding has been supported by the existence of professional relationships between the organisation and its CEO, and donors. This includes relationships that either already existed or those which have been developed by the CEO during her tenure.

Diversity of grant applicants

The BGF is designed to support Seychellois-led projects, and targets five stakeholder groups as prospective applicants: locally registered NGOs, Businesses, Parastatal Organisations, Government departments or agencies, and Seychellois citizens. Despite the success so far in promoting and delivering the BGF, the fund does suffer from a lack of diversity in the number of applicants, and grantees from different eligible groups.

Under BGF rounds 1 to 4 of the 45 projects approved, 18 grantees were national NGOs/CSOs and 18 were Seychellois citizens. In contrast, 5 grantees were national business, 3 grantees were government agencies and only 1 grantee was a parastatal organisation. To date, most grantees primarily come from two of the five eligible groups, NGOs and citizens, and projects led by these two groups account for 80% of all funded projects. The BGF is underachieving in support of the other three groups of eligible grantees.

The reasons for this variation are not immediately obvious from application data but may the following factors should be considered:

• Capacity of less represented stakeholder groups to prepare successful BGF applications. The national NGO sector in Seychelles, like that in many countries is likely more used to preparing grant applications from funding bodies than for example businesses. Because of its rigour, the process for developing projects, writing applications, and providing supporting documentation, may discourage some applicants. This is reflected in the applicant data to some extent, in terms of the number of grants that have gone to NGOs/CSOs. However, the second largest category of successful applicants is citizens, which perhaps points to the impact of the work that SeyCCAT’s small team of staff do to help applicants develop projects ideas and complete the proposal process.

• Factors that drive motivation to apply, for example coverage of staffing costs,
which may be more attractive to a national NGO than to a government or parastatal agency.

- Timing of grant application windows. To date the BGF has utilised a six-week application window for each call for proposals which limits the time for development of project proposals.

BGF application and approval data indicates that the number of applications from businesses grew from round 4 (13) to round 5 (18). Applications from government agencies remained fairly static from round 4 (3) to round 5 (4), as do those from Parastatal agencies, round 4 (0) and round 5 (1).

**Within better represented categories, qualitative data gathered for this review suggested a need to continue to strengthen engagement with grassroots NGOS and civil society groups, for example groups that represent fishers, and to strengthen engagement with the tourism industry, which is considered to be under-represented within the grantee pool. Looking ahead, SeyCCAT may also want to consider increased targeting and relationship building with government and parastatal organisations, to understand the motivations for these groups to apply for the BGF, and identify areas of mutual interest, and continue sensitisation and engagement efforts with the business community to maintain interest in applying for grants.**

**Capacity of grant applicants**

Early data compiled by SeyCCAT, and the BGF grants committee on the type of projects funded under the BGF has begun to indicate some weaknesses, for example:

- Research projects that individually have value, but which do not contribute to a broader research strategy that identifies the needs for implementing the MSP or adapting to climate change, and how these can be addressed.

- Limited innovation in some areas, and repetition of similar types of projects. For example, in the number of communication projects funded under rounds 1 – 4.

The majority of work funded by SeyCCAT is not designed and implemented by the organisation itself. In achieving its targets, the organisation is dependent on national capacity to design projects that deliver outcomes under all five strategic objectives, and to design innovative projects in key areas, in particular MPA management and climate change adaptation. National capacity for this, and to absorb funding was identified as a potential weakness by respondents to this review.

Another challenge noted by the review is capacity of some grantees to deliver projects. When implementation capacity is low, and a portfolio expands, the requirement for the organisation granting the funds to administer, and monitor grants, and support accountability for funding can increase, creating unnecessary extra workload. As described in Figure 6 below, SeyCCAT, with the support of partners, has invested in strengthening the capacity of grantees to both develop project ideas, and to manage and monitor these projects. Qualitative data gathered for this review included praise for this commitment to building national capacity. This work should continue to be a priority, alongside disbursing funding.

**COVID-19 pandemic**

Since early 2020, the most significant external factor to have affected SeyCCAT and the Seychelles is the global COVID-19 pandemic. In relation to delivery of SeyCCAT’s strategy the pandemic has had the following effects:

- Travel restrictions have impacted the ability of international experts to visit the Seychelles to support BGF funded projects. Closure of tourism
establishments has also limited access to project sites. These factors will contribute to data gaps in projects since monitoring and data collection activities have been disrupted. The requirement for social distancing has had an impact on the ability of projects to hold presentations or events to share results and support learning.

- Limits on international travel have also had a major impact on Seychelles tourism industry, reducing the number of international tourists coming to the country. This has had a knock-on financial impact on the country through reduced revenue from tourism, reduction in income for businesses, and a reduction in funding for conservation work generated by payment of park entrance fees.

- SeyCCAT staff having to work from home. While this is not the most significant impact, over time it risks eroding organisational culture as staff are unable to work together in person. It also limits the ability of SeyCCAT to induct new staff, at a time when the organisation is growing and hiring new team members.

- The organisation has been unable to hold face-to-face briefings and meetings with prospective BGF applicants. Evidence from rounds 1-4 suggests that such interactions are very effective in encouraging applications.

- The CWCC project has been limited in its ability to hold face-to-face consultations with fishers regarding the seagrass naming work. Project staff adapted to this challenge by using manual data and feedback collection via forms delivered by post.

- SeyCCAT has been limited in its ability to engage in face-to-face meetings with members of the new government, which limits the organisation’s ability to communicate with them.

- SeyCCAT Board, Grant Committee and Finance Committee meetings have had to be held virtually rather than in person.

In addition to these direct effects, the pandemic creates an additional risk to SeyCCAT’s small staff team. Were one team member to fall ill, it could have a large impact on the team. E.g.: if the CEO were to fall ill, or staff who run the BGF were to fall ill during an application window.

**Responsiveness to stakeholder needs and priorities**

The creation of SeyCCAT and the roll-out of the BGF has created a route to funding for local organisations and individuals, who may previously have not had access to similar grant programmes and not been eligible for, or capable of applying for international funding. The successful growth of the BGF has been positively influenced by the efforts of SeyCCAT staff to understand the needs of stakeholders, and work with them to facilitate the application process.

To strengthen the accessibility of the BGF to local communities, SeyCCAT began accepting applications in both English and Creole, removing a potential language barrier to grass-roots applicants, a move that has been praised by stakeholders. Capacity building support to prospective applicants has played a strong role in increasing the number of applications and has benefited from the SWIOFish3 project, and delivery partners such as the Guy Morel Institute, and Enterprise Seychelles agency.

To encourage applications, SeyCCAT staff offer applicants 1:1 briefing sessions where they will provide a walk-through of the application process, and review application documents prior to submission. Concept note development workshops are run in four
different locations in the Seychelles\textsuperscript{2}, and the organisation provides online resources including application guidelines and templates for application documents. Social and national media is used to promote the Blue Grants Fund and showcase SeyCCAT funded projects, and prospective applicants are also able to join WhatsApp group chats with SeyCCAT staff and other applicants for support during the application process. Figure 6 below illustrates a timeline of other key initiatives that have been pursued to engage with applicants and encourage submissions.

SeyCCAT’s outreach to prospective applicants is highly rated by the organisation’s stakeholders, as is the visibility it has brought to initiatives and funding available. As one respondent and BGF applicant commented: “With SeyCCAT, their staff are always available”.

Feedback gathered for this review highlighted that some organisations and stakeholders may not be aware of their eligibility to access support and funds, for example those in small fishing communities, who are not represented by a group or organisation.

As shown in figure 6, SeyCCAT is supporting the development of local human capital through the BGF. It is also doing so through other avenues. Under the CWCC project, consultation with project stakeholders has been used to identify their priority areas for capacity building and skills development to support the project e.g.: in seagrass, beach or wetland monitoring, environmental rehabilitation, water quality monitoring. SeyCCAT has also advocated with the project donor for capacity building activities to be extended to organisations who are not partners on the project, so as to maximise the reach of these initiatives. SeyCCAT received positive feedback from respondents to this review for its commitment to working with and developing the capacity of national partners and stakeholders’ knowledge base, and scientific and research expertise.

Response to stakeholder priorities

SeyCCAT consults with national stakeholder organisations when defining the objectives of each round of the BGF. By doing so it provides a mechanism for stakeholders to engage in defining focus areas, based on national needs. For each funding round, a Request for Proposals (RFP) is launched identifying priority areas in which projects are sought. Decisions regarding the content of each RFP are guided by the Grants Committee, whose members include representatives from Government, national and international NGOs, businesses, and parastatals. These consultations provide a mechanism to ensure that stakeholder priorities sit at the heart of each BGF funding round.

Through delivery of the BGF SeyCCAT has provided a route for funding for many local organisations and citizens. In doing so it has created opportunities for organisations who may not be able to access funds through other routes, for example the Praslin Fishers’ Association. It has also provided grants to a significant number of the Seychelles environmental NGOs including Seychelles Islands Foundation, Islands Conservation Society, Marine Conservation Society Seychelles, and Green Islands Foundation, and funded research and conservation work by these organisations. It is also beginning to act as a catalyst for attracting different stakeholders into the Seychelles environment sector, for example businesses, as can be seen in the increases in the number of businesses applying for funding under the BGF.

\textsuperscript{2} Victoria, Anse Royale, Praslin, La Digue
Guy Morel Institute, and Enterprise Seychelles agency engaged to create a capacity building programme for applicants to support prospective applicants, and specifically entrepreneurs, to develop their project concept and to write proposals. 65 people attended, and 17 submitted proposals to the BGF.

SeyCCAT began accepting BGF proposals in Creole, removing a potential language barrier for applicants.

Communication strategy developed with targeted community information sessions for: fishing communities; students at Seychelles Maritime Academy, UniSey and Seychelles Business Studies Academy; female entrepreneurs; public sector representatives. SCCI hosted similar events and SeyCCAT participated in the national jobs fair. In 2019 these activities allowed SeyCCAT to engage with 170 people.

Workshops on writing proposals and budget development were delivered for prospective applicants. 65 people attended, of which 11 applied.

Project planning and development manual, supported by SWIOFish3, was created to guide prospective applicants through the process of developing an idea and completing an application. Available on SeyCCAT’s website.

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) training and workshops for prospective applicants continue.

Early Feedback lab added to the suite of support available, providing confidential feedback on project ideas.

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) training delivered to prospective BGF applicants through support of the SWIOFish3 project.

Online training delivered for BGF#5, covering proposal and budget development, and preparation for financial reporting. The course was offered on two separate occasions in May 2021. Recordings of the training are made available on SeyCCAT’s website.
By delivering the BGF, the organisation has also provided one mechanism by which the Government of Seychelles (GoS) can demonstrate to its international stakeholders its commitment to the terms of the debt swap deal and the funding of marine conservation work. Through secondment of staff (Helena Sims) it has provided a key resource for the Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) process, supporting both national goals and the conservation aims of stakeholders such as The Nature Conservancy (TNC).

Analysis: Some stakeholders would like to see more smaller organisations benefiting, such as fisher’s associations. Rather than the larger organisations like SIF. However, SeyCCAT has the ability to be a broker for large projects for organisations like SIF, and to provide grass-roots funding for smaller organisations too.

Projects funded by the BGF

Since its launch in 2017, the BGF has funded a wide range of projects responsive to stakeholder and organisational priorities:

In the fisheries sector projects have supported: research into the ecology of recreationally targeted fish species, and into plankton in Seychelles waters; feasibility studies of online fish identification tools, and sustainable fisheries guides for hotel and restaurant users; and restoration of spiny lobster habitat, and assessment and valuation of the Parrotfish fishery, both to support development of sustainable fisheries.

Focussing on the artisanal fisheries sector, BGF funded work has included piloting voluntary fishing zone closures and improving socio-economic knowledge of the artisanal fishery. Piloting integration of tracking logbooks and market traceability tools, undertaking a cost-benefit analysis based on a value chain approach of the Mahe Artisanal fishery, and researching the impact of artisanal fishery on fish species of concern.

The BGF has funded the creation of communication and education materials in a variety of areas including Aldabra’s vulnerability to the climate crisis and its conservation efforts, wildlife books and education materials for school children on marine and coastal ecosystems, sustainability, environmental protection, and climate change. Communication and education materials on ocean health and sustainability targeting all Seychellois citizens, and development of a citizen’s guides to climate change.

To support Seychelles new and existing marine and coastal protected areas the BGF has funded projects in the following areas: tackling and removing plastic waste pollution; research into vulnerable species such as Sickle Fin Lemon sharks, and tracking of bird species including Sooty Terns and the Red-Footed Booby; mapping of coral population connectivity and ocean currents in the Seychelles, and of the marine predator community around Aldabra; coastal mapping and monitoring around Mahe; community based wetland rehabilitation and mangrove rehabilitation work, and mapping and monitoring of mangrove habitats on Praslin Island.

In the trialling of business models in the Blue Economy (BE), the BGF has funded: training and development of BE entrepreneurs, including an internship programme and marine scholarship programme; a BE business accelerator programme (targeting 20 businesses); development of a sustainable Seaweed composting business; development of new routes to market for local fishers; research to assessing the potential for generating marine energy around Mahe, Praslin and La Digue; research & development for commercial aquaculture including Sea-cucumbers, Seaweed, and Rock Oysters; development of a roadmap to blue carbon opportunities, and development of a sustainable snorkelling guide.
**Blue Carbon and Seychelles Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)**

Seagrass sequesters carbon, but historically seagrass has been poorly studied. Between 2012 and 2016, The GOS-UNDP-GEF Expansion and Strengthening of Protected Areas project supported preliminary baseline seagrass surveys and mapping of benthic habitats in shallow water areas, at four sites in Seychelles: Alphonse, Desroches, Farquhar, Poivre Atolls, led by Dr Jeanne A. Mortimer.

In 2019, Dr Mortimer then worked on an expedition with Nekton Deep Ocean Exploration (co-financed by Nekton and SeyCCAT under the Deep Blue Grants Fund), that enabled further survey and research work of seagrass in the Seychelles. Discovery of seagrass debris at depths of at least 300m provided evidence that seagrass functions as a Blue Carbon sink.

Data and findings from these projects influenced the development of the SeyCCAT managed Pew funded Coastal Wetlands and Climate Change (CWCC) project, which is aiming to measure the contribution of seagrass to Seychelles NDCs under the Paris Climate Change accord/agreement.

SeyCCAT has therefore enabled development of the science of seagrass in the Seychelles, initially through the BGF and the partnership with Nekton, building on previous research in this area, and then by leveraging increased financial support from the Pew Charitable Trusts. SeyCCAT is enabling expansion of scientific knowledge in this area, at a level that is nationally significant for the Seychelles. Responsiveness to stakeholder needs is also demonstrated on the CWCC project, through which an initiative has been started to identify Creole words for seagrass. SeyCCAT has taken this path in order to ground the project in the national context.

In addition to the CWCC project, SeyCCAT is supporting another blue carbon project through the BGF. The ‘Roadmap of Blue Carbon Opportunities in Seychelles’. It aims to build a literary roadmap of Blue Carbon in the Seychelles, which will set a framework to establish a Blue Carbon market in Seychelles.

**Areas not funded**

Climate change adaptation and waste management are two areas in which SeyCCAT has not been effective in the first three years of the strategy. Stakeholder feedback gathered for this review, and by SeyCCAT itself has identified climate change adaptation as an area in which stakeholders would like to see greater investment and a greater presence by the organisation.

**Challenges**

SeyCCAT’s strategic objectives include SOS: Trialling and nurturing business models to secure the sustainable development of the Blue Economy. In delivering outcomes in this area two key challenges became apparent during this review. The first is that the Blue Economy is a loosely defined term, both in the Seychelles and globally. Although BGF resources include guidance on sustainable investment\(^3\), identifying projects or businesses that sit within the sustainable Blue...
Economy or identifying how current businesses can be strengthened and supported through Seychelles Blue Finance mechanisms was identified as a challenge by respondents to this review.

Analysis: SeyCCAT has the opportunity to support exploration of what the Sustainable Blue Economy means for the Seychelles, and to use the BGF to identify what businesses and models this could involve. At present BGF funds are already supporting a number of projects in this area, for example a Blue Economy Accelerator program to trial new business models, and projects exploring the feasibility of aquaculture businesses. Going forward, consideration should also be given to how the BGF could not only support identification of new sustainable Blue Economy enterprises, but how it can support current business owners, and fishers, particularly in light of the creation of new additional MPAs where fishing activity may be restricted.

The second challenge to SO5 apparent from this review is that supporting Blue Economy (BE) businesses is considered outside of the remit of SeyCCAT by some stakeholders. In the Act of Parliament that created SeyCCAT, the third objective of the Trust describes how the organisation should ‘perform exclusively for the charitable, educational and scientific purposes for the benefit of the public’. A potential conflict may exist here in the purpose of the Trust as enshrined in Seychelles’ national legislation, and the role it is currently playing in supporting development of BE concepts and for-profit business models. Supporting the BE is a legitimate area of work for SeyCCAT to engage in, but the organisation and its Board needs to be aware of the potential for complaints and or conflict.

While the BGF is clearly responsive to individual stakeholder objectives in the NGO/CSO sector and for Seychellois citizens, it is unclear whether these projects contribute toward a larger national picture, and whether funding allocated to small research projects contributes to national needs or a national research agenda, for example, whether data from BGF grants contributes to filling data and knowledge gaps for MSP implementation, and MPA management.

Prior to the Seychelles designating 30% of its EEZ as protected areas, the country already had a network of marine parks with existing funding needs. The Seychelles has now created a greater area of protected zones in turn creates an additional need for funding to support their management.

The cost of funding the implementation of the Marine Spatial Plan is estimated at $42m per year\(^4\). SeyCCAT itself recognises the priority of ensuring these MPAs have sustainable financing and effective management of these areas, and the organisation is currently funding work aimed at identifying sustainable sources of financing for MPAs. Another opportunity to support MSP implementation exists by using the BGF in a more strategic way to fund high quality research, that provides data for initiatives such as MPA management.

Currently, SeyCCAT benefits from a relatively secure funding in the form of the Debt Swap and Blue Bond proceeds, a strong reputation and the interest of various international donors and organisations. In an environment where other environmental organisations are seeing their income sources shrink from reductions in tourism revenue, and the removal of CSR funding, SeyCCAT has an opportunity to fill this gap and to support the Seychelles in moving from MPA zoning to

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effective MPA management through the more strategic use of the BGF.

Whilst this is simple to identify some respondents queried whether capacity exists at the national level to design and develop projects that contribute towards MSP implementation. In aligning the BGF with such a high-level target, SeyCCAT would need to consider engaging national stakeholders and technical experts in developing a research strategy or identifying a portfolio of example projects that grantees could deliver. A risk involved in pursuing such an approach to the BGF, is that the fund may develop in the direction of funding commissioned research projects which may remove focus from being a grant programme accessible to national stakeholders, in particular grass-roots stakeholders.

Prioritisation of Strategic Objectives

Figure 7: SeyCCAT’s Strategic Objectives (SO)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SO</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SO1</td>
<td>Support new and existing marine and coastal protected areas and sustainable use zones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SO2</td>
<td>Empower the fisheries sector with robust science and knowhow to improve governance, sustainability, value, and market options</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SO3</td>
<td>Promote the rehabilitation of marine and coastal habitats and ecosystems that have been degraded by local and global impacts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SO4</td>
<td>Develop and implement risk reduction and social resilience plans to adapt to the effects of climate change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SO5</td>
<td>Trial and nurture business models to secure the sustainable development of Seychelles Blue Economy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ahead of each BGF funding round, SeyCCAT releases a Request for Proposals (RFP). Each RFP highlights which of the five Strategic Objectives are prioritised for funding within a given round. Applicants to the BGF must target their projects towards one of SeyCCAT’s 5 Strategic Objectives (SO). RFPs also highlight priority investments for funding within each Strategic Objective. Analysis of data from the RFPs released for rounds 1-5 of the BGF, and of projects funded shows that SeyCCAT’s Strategic Objectives have not been equally targeted.

Figure 8: Strategic Objectives prioritised in BGF rounds 1-5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BGF Round</th>
<th>Prioritised</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BGF#1</td>
<td>SO2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BGF#2</td>
<td>SO1, SO2, SO5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BGF#3</td>
<td>SO1, SO2, SO3, SO4, SO5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BGF#4</td>
<td>SO1, SO2, SO5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BGF#5</td>
<td>SO1, SO2, SO4, SO5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Under rounds 1-5 of the BGF, SO2 has been prioritised the most frequently (all 5 rounds), and SO3 least frequently (1 round). SO1 and SO5 have been prioritized in 4 out of 5 rounds, and SO4 has been prioritized in two rounds. One explanation for this can be found in the way that the BGF is funded. Since 2018, the Blue Bond proceeds have contributed $500K annually to BGF resources. The proceeds of the Blue Bond are tied to the SWIOFish3 and promoting this project’s objectives, which align primarily with SO1, SO2 and SO5.

Data on allocation of BGF resources to the SOs

The figures below illustrate how many BGF projects have been funded per SO in total from rounds 1-4, and individually per funding round, and the value of funding allocated to each SO cumulatively from rounds 1-4.
As figure 9 shows, 90% of funded projects have focussed on strategic objectives 1, 2 and 5 (14, 15 and 12 projects respectively). SO3 and SO4 only have two BGF projects each prioritizing these areas. Figure 10 illustrates how the vast majority of BGF funding disbursed under rounds 1-4 has gone to SO1, 2 and 5. Projects that prioritize SO 1, 2 and 5 have received 36%, 29% and 30% respectively of BGF funds disbursed to date. Projects prioritizing SO3 have received 4% of funds disbursed to date and projects prioritizing SO4 have received just 1% of BGF funds disbursed to date.

This picture can be explained by the large contribution of Blue Bond proceeds towards capitalization of the BGF, and the fact that under the SWIOFish3 projects, there is a requirement for these funded to prioritize achievement of SO1, 2 and 5. The significance of the variance in funding levels between SO 1, 2 and 5 and SO 3 and 4 is still perhaps unexpected.

Figure 9: Number of BGF projects funded per Strategic Objective (SO)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic Objective</th>
<th>SO1</th>
<th>SO2</th>
<th>SO3</th>
<th>SO4</th>
<th>SO5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total projects</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BGF#1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BGF#2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BGF#3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BGF#4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Investments prioritized for funding through the BGF

The Twenty22 Strategy document lists a number of priority investments that sit within each SO. In each RfP information is provided on which priority investments SeyCCAT aims to fund under that BGF funding round, and therefore what type of activities may be eligible for funding. Analysis of RfPs from rounds 1-5 shows that the way in which this information is presented has varied from round to round:

- In the RFPs for BGF#1 and BGF#2, priority investments are given as examples of work that may be funded, but it is made clear that proposals are not restricted to these areas only.
- In the RFP for BGF3 and BGF4 however, a list of priority areas is given for each SO (1-5) with guidance that only projects in these areas will be funded.
- In the RFP for BGF5 a list of priority investments is provided, without guidance on whether projects can sit outside of these areas or not. The RFP further states that following the designation of 30% of Seychelles EEZ as MPAs, and to ensure adaptive management, the country needs to close the significant knowledge gaps by conducting more research and building capacity of stakeholders in marine management and blue enterprises.

Further, comparison of the list of priority investments described in the original Twenty22 strategy document, vs. those described in various RfPs shows the following:

- Across the five RfPs released to date **112** different priority areas for funding are described.
- Under BGF#1 and BGF#2, the priority investments used as examples in the RFPs more or less match those described in SeyCCAT’s strategy document.
- Under BGF#3, BGF#4 and BGF#5, the priority investments listed in the RFPs are more specific and more developed than those listed in the Twenty22 strategy document.
- Under S0s 1, 2 and 5, a large number of different priority areas have been
SO4 is not listed after BGF#3, but the list of priority investments for later RfPs does include studying the impact of climate change on ecosystems, goods, and services.

A number of the priority areas described in the Twenty22 strategy document have not been targeted under any RfP.

This approach to targeting priority areas for investment/eligible activities shows flexibility of the BGF RfP process to prioritise different needs at different time and it indicates that the BGF committee is actively considering needs on a regular basis. It also indicates quite diversified targeting of outcomes by the fund, across a large number of specific areas.

Analysis of RfPs shows in some cases, nuanced changes to wording of priority areas that appear on consecutive RfPs, from one round to another, and in others quite large changes in how priority investments are described.

From an external perspective such an approach could provide a challenge to a new entity or individual who considers applying to the fund. Frequent changes to the description of eligible activities made from one RfP to another may create difficulty in identifying an eligible area of funding that matches an applicant’s interests. Similarly, an entity that is unsuccessful in one funding round due to administrative or compliance reasons and considers applying in the next round may find that their project no longer fits a priority area for funding.

Analysis of BGF project data shows that not all priority areas listed on the RfPs for rounds 1-5 were funded, but that unfunded priority areas are not necessarily included in the next RfP. This raises the question as to why if a priority area was not funded for example in round 3, it does not appear in the eligible priority areas for round 4.

Should SeyCCAT continue with these strategic focus areas, and is there evidence that any should be re-defined?

This review did not identify any evidence that SeyCCAT’s Strategic Objectives should be changed, however quantitative and qualitative data gathered indicates that greater consideration needs to be given to equal targeting of the five areas, and to more succinct identification and communication of priority investments.

Figure 10: allocation of funding (USD) across the five Strategic Objectives (BGF rounds 1 – 4).
The impact of COVID-19

The five strategic objectives, outlined in the Twenty22 strategy is the baseline guide for identification of focus areas for the BGF, but as shown in the analysis above, these are then also influenced by the source of funds, such as the Blue Bond. During the pandemic, this situation has not changed. Although BGF round 4 was delayed due to the impact of COVID-19, the focus of the BGF has continued to be steered by the strategy document and additionally the objectives of the Blue Bond. SeyCCAT has remained relevant, despite the challenges.

The pandemic has had a significant negative impact on the number of tourists visiting Seychelles, and consequently, income received by a number Seychelles conservation organisations reliant on revenue from tourism, though payment of park fees. With the pandemic stretching into its second year, and international travel restrictions still in place, this impact is likely to continue. However, while the economic downturn created by the COVID-19 pandemic has had an impact on national budgets, the existence of the debt swap deal, and of the Blue Bond has meant that financing for marine conservation climate change adaptation, and the Blue Economy has remained in place through the BGF.

The COVID-19 pandemic has influenced the context in which SeyCCAT works but to date no changes have been made to the organisation’s strategic focus as a result of the pandemic. It is worth highlighting that despite the challenges COVID-19 has created, Seychelles pushed ahead with its commitments under the debt swap deal and the designation of 30% of Seychelles EEZ as MPAs took place during the pandemic.

Capitalization of the BGF at $200k per year from the debt swap deal and $500k per year from the Blue Bond, provides SeyCCAT and the BGF with a relatively stable financing base so long as political support is maintained. The existence of a clear strategy and stable funding puts SeyCCAT in a strong position to effectively support BGF grantees, and support conservation, climate adaptation and the Blue Economy in the Seychelles, in a quite uncertain financial context nationally and globally.

2. How efficient are SeyCCAT’s systems and processes for delivery of the Twenty22 strategy?

The BGF application process

SeyCCAT deserves credit for having established a robust application process for the BGF. This process is documented in its Blue Grants Committee manual and Operational manual and includes the creation of a new RfP for each round of funding, a two-step application process for large grants, and detailed proposal and budgeting documents. Administrative review and compliance checks are carried out by SeyCCAT (described in section 2.1), and technical review of proposals is delegated to the BGF Committee, using a scoring system. The Grants Committee in turn makes recommendations to the Board for projects to be approved, providing rigour to the application process. SeyCCAT communicates in writing to all applicants the outcome of the proposal review process. In 2018 SeyCCAT’s grants, and operational manuals were updated in 2018 as part of the process to secure SeyCCAT’s role in the Blue Bond. This demonstrates willingness and commitment by SeyCCAT to strengthen its own processes to attract new support and demonstrate accountability to donors. Overall, there is a high level of professionalism and transparency in the BGF application process. This is a key requirement for a fund that is utilising public funds and working on issues of public interest.
Strategies for project development
As described earlier in this report, SeyCCAT consults with stakeholders and the Grants Committee regarding the areas of focus for each round of the RFP, picked from within the 5 SOs. This process allows the organisation to communicate to prospective grantees the type of projects that it would like to fund, and for applicants to identify within their application which element of SeyCCAT’s strategy their application relates to. However, this information is not communicated publicly until each six-week BGF funding window opens. This can be considered inefficient because it prevents prospective applicants from working on project ideas ahead of the funding window, or from knowing what activities are ineligible. For example, in BGF#5, the grants committee decided to discourage applicants from applying for communication projects, but this information was not made available until the application window opened.

There is an opportunity further strengthen the strategic approach of the BGF by either extending the application window or communicating ahead of the application window the SOs and Priority Investments to be targeted by a BGF round. This would allow applicants more time to develop projects in line with the eligible activities described in the RfP.

Separate to the BGF, SeyCCAT has been able to capitalise on its reputation and donor interest by developing standalone projects, such as the Pew funded CWCC project and Oceans 5 funded Protected Areas Implementation project. Securing these two projects, in support of national objectives is undoubtedly a success of SeyCCAT but doing so has required a significant amount of time to be spent primarily by the CEO in developing the project concepts, building relationships with partners and donors, and coordinating the proposal development process.
The role the CEO plays in developing new funding relationships is important, however undertaking the full proposal development process is not an optimum use of their time. SeyCCAT is a small organisation, currently with a small staff complement and, in this context, it is unavoidable that the CEO had to play this role. However, if SeyCCAT is to continue to pursue opportunities such as these the organisation would benefit from the following:

- **Increased technical capacity to develop project ideas**, both for the BGF, and for larger projects where SeyCCAT acts as the broker or fund manager. Relevant areas of technical expertise could include: MPA management; marine science, fishing policy; establishing a research agenda for MSP implementation; and Blue Economy development. According to the Operational Manual, the Grants Committee can consult independent external technical advisors/bodies to provide objective or specialized advice on grant selection.

- **A portfolio of project ideas**, responsive to SeyCCAT’s Strategic Objectives, that can act as templates for projects under the BGF, or outside of this.

**Staffing and growth strategy**

So far SeyCCAT has achieved a huge amount with a small staff complement, but it has ambitious targets and a growing portfolio of work. Now that increased funding is available, the organisation is investing in new positions to support the growing BGF portfolio. The new hires that have taken place recently (Grants Coordinator and M&E Officer) have already strengthened the organisation’s potential to develop and implement projects and the BGF. The four new hires that have recently taken place (Grants Manager, Grants & Fundraising Assistant, Projects Coordinator and Fundraising & Partnerships Manager) have the potential to strengthen the organisation further if suitably qualified candidates can be found and demonstrate that the organisation is actively seeking to improve its own ability to deliver projects.

The organisation has also utilised funding available from partner projects, for example SWIOFish3 to fund activities that strengthen BGF project development and delivery, for example capacity building for grantees. This again demonstrates SeyCCAT’s ability to think strategically and to maximise the resources available to it.

With growth in funding and an organisation’s work portfolio comes a requirement for increased administration and management (for example of the BGF and other projects). Growth in size and staff numbers also entails requirements to induct new staff, and to manage performance, and maintain the working environment and culture. These are two challenges that SeyCCAT faces.

The Board and Executive team should reflect on whether SeyCCAT continues to grow in size, and take on more roles in house, and whether this should be tempered or complemented with increased partnership. As described above, the organisation would benefit from additional technical support, to identify new projects, or to develop project areas etc, but consideration should be given to whether this can come from in-house staff or whether there are partnership opportunities that could deliver this type of support.

It is worth highlighting that presently a large amount of institutional knowledge and relationships, are concentrated in the role of the CEO. The CEO is hugely respected for their leadership of the organisation, but the Board should consider whether a sustainability plan is needed in case of absence (e.g.: through illness, a heightened risk during a global pandemic) or succession. SeyCCAT is a successful and growing organisation, that is potentially approaching a pivotal stage in its
development, where individuals driving certain parts of its work are a key part of its success. In that respect it can be seen as a relatively fragile time.

**The BGF Committee**

SeyCCAT’s Blue Grants Committee is responsible for reviewing BGF proposals and recommending projects to the Board for approval. It is also responsible for providing orientation on SeyCCAT priorities, periodic review of the conservation strategy of SeyCCAT, and participating in the review of the annual workplan. This demonstrates that the Grants Committee plays an integral role in oversight of SeyCCAT’s project portfolio. The existence of this committee provides an accountability mechanism to ensure that projects and programs selected for funding under the BGF, and implementation by SeyCCAT are aligned with the organisation’s strategy and goals.

The committee is supported by SeyCCAT stakeholders who provide their time for free. It meets when it is required to, for example to review BGF applications but members time is limited, and although SeyCCAT aims to make efficient use of this by, for example, summarising application information, some members feel that they do not always have the time to engage as deeply as they would like to. The committee would benefit from the ability to access more expert technical capacity, to review grants and provide technical review of specific areas (e.g.: aquaculture where expertise on the committee is currently lacking).

In addition to the responsibilities described above, the committee is also required to review requests by BGF grantees for changes between budget lines of greater than 10% of the project budget, and in the past has had to be engaged to solve issues regarding gaps in application documentation. These are inefficient uses of the committee, and an alternative accountability mechanism should be considered for approving budget line changes.

**Eligible costs**

According to the Blue Grants Committee manual section 5.2, the BGF cannot be used to fund individual sponsorships for participation in workshops, seminars, conferences, congresses, or individual scholarships. Given SeyCCAT’s long-term vision, the provisions in place for long-term financing, and the challenges facing Seychelles in MPA management this exclusion appears unnecessarily restrictive. Without it the BGF could be used to support training and development at the national level, in particular in areas or importance such as MPA management, conservation and climate change adaptation, and provide a source of funding for capacity development in these areas.

**Clear accountability mechanisms**

At the executive level SeyCCAT has clear accountability mechanisms. The organisation is supported by three other governance structures, the Board of Governors, which among other responsibilities must approve the CEO’s annual workplan, and the Grants Committee and Finance Committee. As described above, some inefficiencies are noted in the role of the Grants Committee. No such inefficiencies are noted in the role of finance committee from this review, however as described in section 1, administrative delays (primarily in relation to submission of paperwork from Board members) resulted in delays in the investment of the endowment fund. Data gathered for this review indicates a delay of approximately 18 months between selection of an investment manager and investment being made.

This can be considered inefficient, particularly in light of the importance of the endowment fund in securing long-term financing for SeyCCAT. SeyCCAT’s governance structures
should aim to avoid situations such as this one in future.

**Due diligence of grant applicants**

SeyCCAT undertakes a high-level of due diligence of applicants accepted for funding. Funding applications undergo administrative compliance checks by SeyCCAT to verify eligibility of proposed activities, eligibility of the applicant, budget compliance and submission of all required paperwork. This verification step takes place prior to technical review. With the support of SWIOFish3, all projects funded under the Blue Bond proceeds are subject to environmental and social screening. Applicants who successfully pass all stages of the application process must then undertake a further review of their financial accountability for project funds six-months into their project. As outlined in the standard BGF grant agreement, grantees are accountable for submitting mid-project or six-monthly (whichever occurs earlier) financial and technical reports. Overall, these compliance, screening and accountability steps demonstrate commitment by SeyCCAT to professional processes. Data collection for this review identified completion of application requirements as a potential challenge for new applicants who may be inexperienced in grant applications. However, there is no indication that application or reporting mechanisms should be simplified, the mechanisms that are in place are robust and suitable for ensuring accountability for and correct use of public funds.

*The efficiency of SeyCCAT staff in administering their accountability mechanism and strength of these mechanisms is recognised by national and international partners and contributes to the organisation’s strong reputation. There exists a challenge here too. With growth of the BGF portfolio and increased funding for other projects comes increased expectation, and SeyCCAT needs to manage these expectations, and with the support of the Board, the Grants Committee and Finance Committee continue to keep standards high.*

**The recruitment of new staff to support the BGF will support maintenance of high standards across a growing portfolio of work. The work currently commissioned with Starling Resources to identify paths to sustainable operational funding is very significant in this respect. Much of SeyCCAT’s growth in staff capacity is grant funded, and the organisation should aim to avoid growing and shrinking as grant funding ebbs and flows. Identifying a sustainable source of operational funding is key to this that. As one stakeholder commented, SeyCCAT’s main function is to be a functional, sustainable Trust Fund. It has achieved functionality, to a high standard, but financial sustainability has not yet been achieved.*

According to the operational manual, SeyCCAT is limited to using 15% of the debt swap proceeds, and of other financing designated to finance grant making, for its administration (operational costs). Given the shortfall in operational costs, SeyCCAT’s Board should consider reviewing and raising this cap in order to provide a sustainable base for the organisation, and resources to maintain the organisation’s efficiency.

**In-house M&E Capacity**

With funding support from Government of Seychelles, SeyCCAT has been able to recruit an in-house M&E Officer. This post previously did not exist in the organisation and the recruitment represents a significant capacity gain. The post holder joined in June 2021, and it is expected that appointment will strengthen SeyCCAT’s ability to understand the impact of the work it undertakes and funds, and to communicate this impact to stakeholders and donors.

**Organisational Results Framework**
Mid-Term Review of the Twenty22 Strategy of SeyCCAT

Of the goal level targets described in the strategy document, value of funding disbursed is a relatively unsophisticated metric. The Twenty 22 strategy document includes metrics for measuring progress of each of the five Strategic Objectives, but it is not clear whether data was gathered against these. With support from the SWIOFish3 project, SeyCCAT was able to fund the development of an organisational Results Framework that describes multiple new performance measures at the Goal, Strategic Objective, and organisational Mission level, along with indicators of management progress, and an indicator guide, that strengthen SeyCCAT’s ability to talk about the impact of its work and complement the current goal level metrics. The aim of developing this new results framework was to provide SeyCCAT with a set of performance measures relevant to its role, and to provide a tool to consistently capture data that can be used to report to partners, funders, and stakeholders. The final version was delivered to SeyCCAT in March 2021, and a briefing held with all SeyCCAT staff. The framework is currently being tested by the organisation.

Project level M&E
Currently, all SeyCCAT projects are able to meet their requirements for external reporting to donors, and no major challenges have been encountered with reporting by BGF grantees. With support from SWIOFish3, SeyCCAT has recently strengthened M&E processes in the BGF, embedding results-based M&E for grantees in the application and grant reporting process through the use of project level results frameworks, focussed on identifying tangible outputs and outcomes. SWIOFish3 funding to SeyCCAT also supported revision of the BGF ‘Project Planning and Business Development Manual’ to embed project level M&E advice in the guidance provided to applicants. Finally, as described in section 2, in 2020 and again with the support of SWIOFish3, M&E capacity building training was made available to BGF applicants. This capacity building training is scheduled to continue to be delivered during each BGF funding round for the duration of the SWIOFish3 project (which ends in June 2023).

M&E capacity building support needs to continue for grantees, it will take a while to embed these processes fully, and so, along with continuing to invest in communications and capacity building, investment in M&E capacity building needs to be continued. The expertise provided by the in-house M&E officer is also utilised to strengthen M&E on other projects outside of the BGF (for example the Pew and Oceans 5 funded grants), and to support the development of M&E frameworks for new project.

3. How coherent has SeyCCAT’s approach been in the national and international context?

The following institutional partnerships have been leveraged by SeyCCAT in support of strategic objectives:

1. SWIOFish3. As described in previous sections of this report, SeyCCAT has partnered effectively with the Department of Blue Economy on the SWIOFish3 project to capitalize the BGF, and support capacity development of SeyCCAT and its grantees.

2. The support of the Pew Charitable Trusts has been leveraged to support the Coastal Wetlands and Climate Change project.

3. SeyCCAT has worked closely with the MACCE (formerly MEECC), the lead agency for the Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) initiative.

4. SeyCCAT leveraged the support Nekton to co-finance the Deep Blue Grants Fund and provide financing for seven Seychelles based researchers.
5. Working with the Seychelles Islands Foundation (SIF), SeyCCAT has leveraged their reputation, and the political commitment demonstrated by Seychelles government to conservation outcomes to secure funding from the Oceans5 to support protected Areas Implementation and Fisheries Reforms.

On this project SeyCCAT is acting as the fund manager and coordinator, with a number of national NGOs and government organisations leading implementation including SIF, GIF, SOSF, MCSS, SFA, MFBE, MACCE, and external partners that include The Nature Conservancy, Blue Nature Alliance, and Waitt Institute.

Oceans5 and the Waitt Foundation became interested in supporting conservation work in the Seychelles because of the debt swap outcome, and demonstration of Seychelles political will after Seychelles announced that it had designated 30% of the EEZ as MPA. SeyCCAT has worked with national organisations to strategically take advantage of this opportunity that has presented itself.

**Challenges to working in partnership**

Personal relationships developed with representatives of partner organisations and donors have played a strong positive role in helping SeyCCAT grow and deliver. Examples include personal relationships that have helped to secure funding, with one donor seeking to contract on the basis that the CEO remains a SeyCCAT staff for the period of the grant. Strong personal relationships being so integral to SeyCCAT’s success reflects both a strength of the organisation and a risk.

*The ability of staff to develop strong working relationships with partners and peer organisations, and the fact that SeyCCAT benefits from working relationships staff hold, developed before they joined SeyCCAT is very positive. However, having a donor tie a contract to the retention of a staff member represents a risk to the organisation were that staff member to leave.*
Opportunities for partnership development

SeyCCAT has worked closely with the MACCE (formerly MEECC), which is the lead agency for the MSP, and coordinated with the department of Blue Economy to channel Blue Bond proceeds to the BGF and support the objectives of the SWIOFish3 project. In recent years, SeyCCAT has strengthened its engagement with stakeholders such as SFA, who have joined the Board, but government agencies have received few BGF grants, and there are less instances of collaboration than with national NGOs/CSOs. SeyCCAT may benefit from having more institutional partnerships, and for example MoUs with partners or national agencies, that outline a commitment to work together in certain areas. The process of developing such agreements may facilitate other national agencies to gain a greater understanding of SeyCCAT’s work and its strengths, and vice versa, and enable development of join projects and initiatives. As with all agreements of this type, the risk that exists is that they become a document agreement in name only. In order to be effective such agreements would need to have a clear focus and objectives, and ideally involve each entity committing resources (cash or in-kind) to the partnership.

Although BGF projects have been successful in working in partnership with academic organisations, overall SeyCCAT’s portfolio benefits from a relatively low number of international technical partners. Seychelles is a small country with a limited number of academic or technical organisations. Respondents to this review described how a large amount of research into conservation and fishing in the Seychelles is supported by international expertise from universities and research institutions. This includes overseas organisations, and international experts on placements at University of Seychelles or national conservation NGOs. This demonstrates how reliant the conservation sector in the Seychelles is on overseas technical expertise. International organisations are not eligible for funding under the BGF, but their expertise could add quality to projects by supporting best practice, and raising standards, help deliver a more focussed research agenda that is responsive to the MSP and promote a strengthened interface between science and policy in the Seychelles.

Community interests are at the centre of implementation of the MSP, in particular in the fishing and tourism industries. Opportunities may exist to harness the capacity of stakeholders in these industries in development of Seychelles sustainable Blue Economy, for example the role of small-scale fishers (400+ boats), and of tourism operators (inc. boat operators and businesses present Seychelles outer islands) in support monitoring, control, and surveillance (MCS) activities.

External trends

The Twenty22 strategy identifies and number of trends in the external environment that have the potential to influence or impact SeyCCAT’s work. The following page shows an analysis of how these trends have evolved to date.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trend</th>
<th>Evolution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New financing mechanisms present new potential revenues to route to</td>
<td>SeyCCAT has benefited from Seychelles launching the world’s first Sovereign Blue Bond, with proceeds capitalizing the Blue Bond at a rate of $500,000 for 6 years ($3m in total). Successful business development work has brought in just over $5.3m in grant funding for major projects either managed by SeyCCAT or for which SeyCCAT is channelling the funding to national stakeholders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholders.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large impact investment funds are emerging with a focus on fisheries, protected areas, waste management and sustainable tourism</td>
<td>The Sovereign Blue Bond benefits from investment by impact investors such as Calvert Impact Capital, with proceeds capitalizing the BGF, and the Blue Investment Fund (BIF), managed by Development Bank of Seychelles, both of which provide funding for work with fisheries and protected area management. Waste management and sustainable tourism have not yet been targeted by the BGF. The latter activity is only eligible for funding under the sovereign blue bond if linked to fisheries. Both activities are eligible for funding from proceeds of the debt swap.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seychelles graduated economic status presents an incentive for government to engage with innovative financing models</td>
<td>It is not clear from data gathered during this review how this trend has evolved. The full impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Seychelles economic position and status remains to be seen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsible business practices are increasingly promoted by the private sector and present opportunities to engage in a meaningful and scalable way with the tourism and fisheries industries in Seychelles.</td>
<td>It is not clear from data gathered how this trend has evolved, and this perhaps needs to be monitored during the economic recovery following the pandemic. The term ‘Build Back Better’ has been used frequently by countries and organisations across the globe to describe how the pandemic provides an opportunity to rebuild economies in a more sustainable manner. Critics argue that this may be overlooked in a rush by businesses to return to profitability. SeyCCAT may want to consider the role it can play in promoting responsible business practices, and sustainability standards with business grantees under the BGF.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blended (public and private) financial instruments are likely to grow in abundance such that SeyCCAT could work with partners to articulate a pipeline of investible projects to leverage these designs.</td>
<td>Under the Pew funded Coastal Wetlands and Climate Change project, SeyCCAT has begun exploring an innovative blended finance blue carbon financing mechanism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working in multi-agency partnerships is increasingly evident in the environmental sector and presents opportunities for Seychelles to leverage its capacities to larger effect.</td>
<td>SeyCCAT has harnessed this trend through its work in partnership with the Ministry of Environment on the MSP, and with the department of Blue Economy under the SWIOFish3 project. The recently secured funding opportunity through Oceans 5 is a multi-agency project with nine partner organisations who are either government agencies, or national and international environmental NGOs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

"Mid-Term Review of the Twenty22 Strategy of SeyCCAT"
Trend | Civil society is demanding transparency and participation in decision-making.
---|---
Evolution | This trend remains of importance for SeyCCAT in its role stewarding the use of public funds (generated by the debt swap and Blue Bond). Feedback gathered for this review identified a need to ensure SeyCCAT continues its strong publicity and communications work.

Trend | Technological solutions are increasingly accessible to new markets and users.
---|---
Evolution | It is not clear from data gathered during this review how this trend has evolved. In BGF round 3, funding has been granted to projects exploring a new digital route to market for fishermen, and of tracking, logbook and market traceability tools for fishermen.

Coordination and coherence

SeyCCAT actively works with partners to identify whether proposed BGF projects would overlap with, or duplicate similar interventions already being funded. For example, under the BGF SeyCCAT will check with SWIOFish3 that proposed projects do not duplicate SWIOFish3 project activities; the organisation also consults closely with national conservation NGOs to avoid duplication of efforts.

This review did not identify any instances of duplication between BGF projects, or between SeyCCAT’s work and that of other organisations working the same national space. SeyCCAT’s mandate is designed to align with that of its stakeholders, and so there is inevitably overlap in their areas of work but so far this has been managed the right way, with SeyCCAT providing funding and support to its partners and peer organisations. As described earlier SeyCCAT itself has identified some repetition in the type of BGF projects funded and has acted in BGF#5 to avoid further instances by limiting funding for communications projects.

SeyCCAT has received some criticism for accessing grant funding, and as its portfolio grows it needs to ensure that it is not seen as an organisation diverting funding away from national conservation NGOs, or other organisations working to develop the Blue Economy. Its achievements so far, and reputation bolster its chances of attracting funding offers, or winning competitive funding applications. The organisation needs to be aware of the risk of being seen as a competitor to national NGOs, especially in the context of the COVID-pandemic where financial resources available to these organisations have diminished. With an expansion into project management work, for example under the CWCC project, there is also a risk of being seen to duplicate the work of, or compete with the work of, project management units such as the PCU, or BIOFIN.

SeyCCAT was originally established to manage funding, not to implement projects. However, the organisation has proved itself capable of attracting external funding and bringing this funding into the national conservation and Blue Economy sectors. The organisation is not designed to be a project implementation body, but it occupies a space where it could effectively act as a broker for international funding, and funnel this to other implementing agencies. The Oceans5 funding opportunity, described above is a good example of how SeyCCAT has successfully filled this role.

Expanding into such a role may require broadening the organisation’s remit, but there is a strong case for allowing this to happen and allowing SeyCCAT’s role to develop if it is
supporting national needs, for example, funding for implementation of the MSP. If it is to take on such a role and use its strength to access international funding it should continue to ensure that this funding strengthens national organisations and supports national implementing partners.
### Partnerships leveraged by BGF grantees in pursuit of achieving their individual project goals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University of Massachusetts Amherst, USA</th>
<th>University of Nebraska, USA</th>
<th>Fregate Island Private</th>
<th>Trak divers</th>
<th>Turtlesel</th>
<th>Club Med Resort St Anne</th>
<th>Max Planck Institute of Animal Behaviour</th>
<th>Praslin BDP Watershed Committee</th>
<th>Ministry of Agriculture, Climate Change &amp; Environment (MACC)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carleton University, Ontario, Canada</td>
<td>Royal University, Canada</td>
<td>Raffles Club</td>
<td>Holiday Inn Silhouette</td>
<td>Iridescent Media</td>
<td>Research Institute</td>
<td>Green Islands Foundation</td>
<td>GVI Seychelles</td>
<td>Ministry of Fisheries and Blue Economy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Seychelles (Unissey)</td>
<td>Stanford University, USA</td>
<td>Island Development Company</td>
<td>VCS IT company</td>
<td>Collect Localisation Satellite</td>
<td>Area for Pre-Conservation Conservation Programmes</td>
<td>Farquhar Foundation</td>
<td>WWF South Africa</td>
<td>Seychelles Fishing Authority (SPA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of York, UK</td>
<td>Alphonse Island Lodge</td>
<td>Oceanic Research</td>
<td>Seychelles Investment Board</td>
<td>AFRICOM South Africa</td>
<td>Anba Lao</td>
<td>Corals</td>
<td>Seychelles Agricultural Agency</td>
<td>Seychelles Parks and Gardens Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Oxford, UK</td>
<td>Bird Island Eco Lodge</td>
<td>Percussion Key Company</td>
<td>Seychelles Chamber of Commerce and Industry</td>
<td>Enterprise Conservation SAR</td>
<td>Wild Wings Bird Management</td>
<td>Wildlife Club of Seychelles</td>
<td>Ministry of Land and Housing</td>
<td>Seychelles Meteorological Authority</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Key**

- **Academic**
- **Seychelles businesses**
- **NGOs**
- **Government agencies**
- **Parastatal agencies**
SWOT Analysis

This review considered how the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of SeyCCAT, identified in the Twenty22 strategy have evolved in respect to strategy delivery.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Twenty22 - Strengths</th>
<th>Evolution to date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supportive Board and sub-committees</td>
<td>Still a clear strength of the organisation. Efficiency of the BGF committee’s role could be improved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transparent governance</td>
<td>Still a strength, although SeyCCAT’s role in the Blue Economy could be made clearer, and the diversity of Board membership improved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diverse public-private Board membership</td>
<td>Current Board membership is split as follows: 4 government members (inc. Board Chair and Vice-Chair); 1 parastatal member; 3 NGO members, and 5 members from the business community. Every 3 years the Board is constituted in favour of non-governmental and private sector balance. Historically, taking account of all current and previous Board members and observers to have served at any time since SeyCCAT’s inception, 46% of these came from government, 29% came from the business sector, 21% came from NGOs and 4% came from Parastatals (this data describes cumulative figures, and not the make-up of any particular Board to have served the organisation).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A focussed mission</td>
<td>Still a clear strength, SeyCCAT has remained focussed on its goals despite a global pandemic. As described in this report rationalisation of priority areas may help increase effectiveness of the BGF along with increased focus on SOs 3 and 4.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence, science-based decision making.</td>
<td>It is unclear from this review how this strength has played out, and for example how often evidence of project results is presented to the BGF committee and Board. As described, SeyCCAT would benefit from being able to access increased technical expertise to develop areas of work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear process framework for asset management</td>
<td>In terms of management of financial assets, it is clear that processes exist, although these did not prevent a significant delay in investment of the endowment. Regarding the management of physical assets purchased using SeyCCAT’s funding, no issues were identified during this review. The creation of a large new grant category under the BGF has resulted in requests for purchase of larger physical assets by grantees. SeyCCAT should ensure that its asset management policy is capable of managing these.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additional strengths SeyCCAT identified:
- **Government of Seychelles support and political commitment to implementation of the MSP.**
- **SeyCCAT’s hard-working executive team and staff, who are committed to the organisation’s goals.**
- **SeyCCAT’s reputation for professionalism, particularly with national and international partners.**
- The organisation’s ability to attract funding in an uncertain financial climate (due in part to the three strengths described above).
- The organisation’s focus on and commitment to working with national partners and grantees and building their capacity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Twenty22 - Weaknesses</th>
<th>Evolution to date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evolving management systems</strong></td>
<td>SeyCCAT has managed this weakness incredibly well. A small team has been highly effective in establishing the organisation and building its reputation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Board Engagement</strong></td>
<td>The weakness identified has been with engagement of the BGF committee and balancing the amount of time that committee members have available to engage, with spending this on tasks where they are most strategically effective.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Operational funding</strong></td>
<td>This remains a weakness, but SeyCCAT has been effective in sourcing grant funding to cover these costs and has commissioned work to identify sustainable solutions to this challenge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Board and committee dependence on volunteers</strong></td>
<td>This remains a weakness but is balanced by the goodwill of Board and Committee members who are engaged in the organisation’s work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Exposed to criticisms of government</strong></td>
<td>No evidence that this has created significant challenges to date, but as highlighted earlier, the change in administration has created the need for renewed engagement with government by SeyCCAT to sensitize ministers to Seychelles commitments and SeyCCAT’s mission.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Staff succession</strong></td>
<td>This is not a weakness that has presented itself so far. But it remains a weakness. A small number of staff hold a large amount of institutional knowledge. Key relationships (especially those with donors and partners) rest with the CEO.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tied to MSP milestones</strong></td>
<td>This review did not identify this as a challenge to date because Seychelles met its target of designating 30% of the EEZ as MPA. A greater challenge now exists in supporting the management of already existing and newly created MPAs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other Weaknesses to be aware of:
- The establishment of Seychelles Ocean Authority, an independent body to ensure monitoring and protection of the Seychelles Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), is delayed.
- Limitations in national capacity to develop and deliver innovative BGF projects under all five pillars.
- The Blue Grants Fund lacks a strategic approach that would better align it with support MSP implementation and MPA management.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Twenty22 - Opportunities</th>
<th>Evolution to date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strong national and international interest in the model</strong></td>
<td>SeyCCAT has successfully seized this opportunity to leverage more funding for its objectives. This remains as an opportunity that could support more funding for MPA management, climate change adaptation and development of the Blue Economy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Novel conservation financing a growing international trend</strong></td>
<td>SeyCCAT has benefited from this opportunity through the sovereign Blue Bond.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Many tourist businesses in Seychelles operating to minimum standards: This opportunity has not been realised, but strengthening engagement with the national tourism sector is an area that SeyCCAT could invest more in.

Expand synergies with similar projects: SeyCCAT has seized the opportunity with SWIOFish3.

Building SeyCCAT beyond debt swap and MSP: SeyCCAT has built a very strong brand and has begun to work in other areas such as Blue Economy, and Blue Carbon.

Blue Economy Roadmap: The organisation’s role in the Blue Economy would benefit from being formalised.

New opportunities for SeyCCAT and Seychelles:
- The SeyCCAT board has high convening power in being able to bring together representatives of government and other sectors who are all stakeholders in the Blue Economy, Marine Spatial Plan, and conservation efforts.
- Strategic development of the BGF to support the move to MSP management.
- Building a local knowledge base and strengthening national scientific expertise and research knowledge.
- Defining a national research agenda.
- Promote high-quality data collection for national and international interests, e.g., on carbon sequestration potential of seagrass.
- Acting as a broker for funding from international donors, and channelling this to national implementing partners.

Twenty22 Strategy - Threats

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competitive culture</th>
<th>Evolution to date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Threats</td>
<td>High Income Status, and need to evolve aid dependency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumulative threats to ecosystems</td>
<td>This remains a threat to Seychelles ecosystems. Feedback for this review suggested that following the agreement of the MSP, and more comprehensive approach to management of fisheries, and of IUU may be required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public perception of fund management in the Seychelles</td>
<td>SeyCCAT needs to continue to be aware of this threat, and the impact that bad press could have on the organisation. As described earlier, as SeyCCAT’s portfolio of work expands, it is important that the organisation continues to maintain high standards for implementation and accountability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue Economy pipeline not well developed</td>
<td>This remains a threat, although BGF funding has been directed towards projects aiming to expand this pipeline.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National enterprise capacity is limited</td>
<td>This remains a threat, along with the absorptive and innovative capacity of national implementing partners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSP intertwined with SeyCCAT / Stakeholder agitation</td>
<td>This remains as a threat. With the agreement of the MSP there is the risk of increased agitation, particularly among the artisanal fishing community, when changes begin to take place on the water.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additional threats to SeyCCAT and Seychelles:
- Threat of negative publicity, in the Seychelles context, negative publicity in the national press could seriously impact the reputation of the organisation. SeyCCAT needs to continue
its sensitization work at the national level regarding Seychelles commitments under the debt swap, and the role of different partners, including international partners such as TNC in this process. It should continue to be transparent regarding the funding it receives and how this is used.

- Political uncertainty possible every four years.
- 13 new MPAs join the already established network, creating an increased need for funding and MCS.
- Seychelles reliance on foreign assistance for MCS activities.
- Foreign investment in Seychelles fishing fleet, and the potential for political influence.
- A need to maintain the Trust’s organisational culture as it grows
Conclusions

How effective has SeyCCAT been in achieving the objectives of the Twenty22 strategy so far?

- In the first three years of the strategy, SeyCCAT is effectively meeting its targets, including those for disbursing funding, and increasing funding available. The organisation is highly respected by stakeholders and peer organisations nationally and internationally and has established a strong reputation which is enabling it to grow.

- Work funded by SeyCCAT is responsive to national stakeholder priorities in the areas of fishing, conservation, environmental protection, and development of the Blue Economy. The organisation is enabling expansion of scientific knowledge in the area of Blue Carbon at a level that is nationally significant for the Seychelles.

- Through the BGF, strategic objectives 1, 2 and 5 have received significantly more focus and funding than strategic objectives 3 and 4. There are weaknesses in how priority areas/activities for each BGF funding round have been communicated to grantees. These areas would benefit from rationalisation.

- Climate change adaptation is an area of national importance currently missing from SeyCCAT’s portfolio at present. Seychelles also faces a looming challenge to fund the implementation of the MSP.

- SeyCCAT benefits from a secure funding base. This provides the opportunity to support the Seychelles in moving from MPA zoning to effective MPA management, and the development of Seychelles Blue Economy, through the more strategic use of the BGF.

- SeyCCAT’s achievements have been positively influenced by the political support it receives from the Seychelles Government, presence of committed hard-working staff, supportive governance and the support of donors and partners.

- SeyCCAT is recognised as having strategically invested in developing the capacity of grantees under the BGF, and for using its success to develop the capacity of national partners.

- Emerging challenges to continuing success through the BGF include diversity of applicants from different stakeholder group, the capacity of applicants to develop innovative projects, absence of a defined research strategy for the BGF, and capacity of national stakeholders to absorb the levels of funding being made available.

- The COVID-19 pandemic slowed SeyCCAT’s effectiveness and will impact the effectiveness of SeyCCAT funded projects.

How efficient are SeyCCAT’s systems and processes for delivery of the Twenty22 strategy?

- SeyCCAT has established a robust and application process for the BGF, that it administers in an efficient and professional manner, along with good due diligence and accountability mechanisms for grantees.

- SeyCCAT has strategically and efficiently capitalized on financial support available from SWIOfish3 to strengthen systems and processes for development and delivery of projects under the BGF.
• There is an opportunity further strengthen the strategic approach of the BGF by either extending the application window or communicating ahead of the application window the SOs and Priority Investments to be targeted by a BGF round.

• SeyCCAT’s success, and increased resources is enabling growth in the organisation’s staff complement that will strengthen it. Recruitment is taking place in roles that are strategically important to supporting delivery of a growing project portfolio, and in business development.

• The CEO would benefit from access to greater technical expertise to support the development of funding proposals to external donors. Currently the level of effort required by the CEO is a potential inefficient use of their time. The BGF committee would also benefit from access to a wider variety of technical expertise and knowledge to support review of funding applications.

• The BGF committee plays an integral role in reviewing applications for funding under the BGF but given that members provide their time pro bono, its role in reviewing and approving request for budget line changes by BGF grantees is inefficient and an alternative accountability mechanism should be identified.

• The strong reputation that SeyCCAT has built for itself, the growth in its funding base and portfolio, and growth in staff complement will all contribute to increasing expectations on the organisation. As it grows SeyCCAT faces the challenge of maintaining high standards. It is important that growth is supported by identification of a sustainable funding base for operational costs to avoid the organisation growing and shrinking as grant funding ebbs and flows.

How coherent has SeyCCAT’s approach to strategy been in the national and international context?

• SeyCCAT has worked with national stakeholders in a coherent and coordinated manner. This review did not identify any instances of duplication between BGF projects, or between SeyCCAT’s work and that of other organisations working the same space.

• SeyCCAT has begun to use its strong reputation and position to leverage increased international funding in support of national priorities, working with national partners and stakeholders in an inclusive manner.

• BGF grantees have successfully leveraged the support of a wide variety of international and national partner organisations from academia, business, government and parastatal organisations, and NGOs, and in doing so have leveraged significant co-financing.

• At the national level opportunities exist to deepen partnerships with government agencies, and with community organisations (particularly those representing fishers) and the tourism industry.

• SeyCCAT funded projects would be strengthened by greater partnership and involvement of international technical partners. Such expertise could add quality to projects by supporting best practice, and raising standards, help deliver a more focussed research agenda that is responsive to the MSP and promote a strengthened interface between science and policy in the Seychelles.
• Its achievements so far, and reputation bolster its chances of attracting funding offers, or winning competitive funding applications. The organisation needs to be aware of the risk of being seen as a competitor to national NGOs, especially in the context of the pandemic where financial resources available to these organisations have diminished.

• Broadening of the organisation’s remit should be allowed to happen in response to national needs and if SeyCCAT has the ability to identify and attract funding for the Seychelles to support national priorities then this should be recognised, and its role adjusted as such. In the current financial climate, having an organisation that can attract funding is highly important and this opportunity should be capitalised on.

• SeyCCAT needs to maintain good relationships with government but retain its independence.
Recommendations

1. SeyCCAT and the Blue Grants Fund committee continue to monitor and analyse the type of applications received under the BGF, and projects funded, to avoid repetition and promote strategic targeting of funds. Recommended actions for SeyCCAT’s Blue Grants Fund Coordinator:

   - **During each funding round:**
     a. Data on the number of applications per SO is collected per round, and cumulatively.
     b. Each pool of applications is reviewed to identify trends (e.g.: applications in similar areas, applications in areas previously funded, gaps in applications compared with details of the RfP)
     c. Ahead of the BGF committee meeting to review applications, a short simple briefing note is provided outlining the data in points a and b above, to help inform committee choices.

   - **After each funding round:**
     - Once funding decisions have been taken for a BGF round, a review takes place of which of the priority areas, described in the RfP have been funded, and which have not been funded, and a brief follow-up analysis provided to the BGF committee to inform preparation of the next RfP.
     - Indicator MG7 in SeyCCAT’s results framework is kept up to date, to manage a continual record of funding allocation under the BGF per SO and identify trends or gaps.

   **Example cycle for review and analysis of BGF applications and awards:**

2. SeyCCAT continues to prioritize investment in strengthening grantee capacity for project development, project management, M&E, and accountability for the use of funds. Options could include:

   - SeyCCAT continue to maximise support provided through SWIOFish3 until end of this project.
   - SeyCCAT’s Board recognize grantee capacity building as an ongoing strategic commission, allowing for utilisation of BGF funds to support this (for example once SWIOFish3 support ends).
   - SeyCCAT maximise opportunities to build capacity building costs into budgets for newly leveraged financial support.
### 3 SeyCCAT considers a more strategic approach to the Blue Grants Fund, including:

- Development of an awards strategy for the BGF, that identifies allocations of donor funding per SO (for example including targeted allocation of debt swap proceeds for underfunded SOs 3 and 4).
- Undertake outreach to identify examples of good practice in priority areas that could be replicated in the Seychelles context under the BGF and invest in the development of a portfolio of project ideas.
- Develop a research strategy the BGF aligned to generating data for the priorities of MSP implementation, climate change adaptation and Blue Economy development, leveraging funding available through the Blue Nature Alliance grant.

### 4 During the remainder of the current strategy period (until end 2022) SeyCCAT pursues the outstanding strategic commissions described in the Twenty22 strategy document:

- Conducting data and gap needs analysis for implementation of the MSP (utilising funding secured form TNC)
- Articulating ideas for Blue Economy projects (exploring whether opportunities exist under for funding this through the Blue Nature Alliance Grant)
- Studying economic diversification opportunities for fishers and associated workers and doing so within the remaining time frame of Blue Bond funding (ending June 2023)

### 5 The BGF committee improve clarity and consistency of how eligible activities for each BGF funding round are communicated by:

- Identify a master list of eligible activities per Strategic Objective
- For each BGF round, select eligible activities for inclusion in the RfP from the master list, and encourage consistency in the way eligible activities are described.

### 6 SeyCCAT continues to invest in outreach work with BGF stakeholders, including fisher communities, and the tourism industry to promote their involvement in the fund as project leads and grantees. Options include:

- Developing a long-term outreach strategy and targeting partnerships with organisations such as Enterprise Seychelles Agency (ESA), and local community organisations and NGOs.
- Developing simple communication materials, describing the BGF, that can be shared with local community organisations and NGOs.
- Engage past grantees, Board Members and BGF committee members to champion the BGF in their communities and organisations where they work.

### 7 SeyCCAT’s Board ensures that any future updates to SeyCCAT’s governing documents include clearer identification of SeyCCAT’s role in supporting development of the Seychelles Sustainable Blue Economy, and in implementing the MSP. Opportunities exist at an upcoming Board retreat for and through funding provided by TNC for review and update of the Act and governing documents.
### 8 SeyCCAT and the Board begin planning for revision of SeyCCAT’s strategy, and preparation of a second medium-term strategy for the period 2023-2027.

### 9 SeyCCAT ensure that recent changes to the BGF grant categories are documented in the Blue Grants Committee and Operational Manuals, and approval requested from the World Bank.

### 10 SeyCCAT consider options for increasing the length of time available for development of BGF project ideas by prospective grantees, options could include:

- Lengthening the application window beyond six weeks, to 10 or 12 weeks; and/or:
- Releasing the RfP for a forthcoming BGF round one month ahead of the application window opening.

**Consideration should be given to:**

- how communication and capacity building support activities can be timed to support a longer window for development of projects and application documents.
- Balancing the workload for SeyCCAT staff that an extended application window may create, for example extending the application window, but reducing the number of days per week that SeyCCAT’s office is open for application support from 5 days per week to 2 or 2.5 days per week.

### 11 SeyCCAT and its Board agree an alternative accountability mechanism for approval of requests for changes between budget lines of greater than 10% of the project budget, to remove this responsibility from the BGF committee’s role. A suggested change to current procedures is described below:

a) If the budget line movement is less than 10%, this can be dealt with by the Secretariat and can be made at any time (No-change: this facility remains the same)

b) Budget line movements of more than 10%, requests are restricted to the first mid-term report and the penultimate report (6 months before the completion of the project). Such budget line movements can only be requested twice. The following procedures apply:

i. Such requests are reviewed internally within SeyCCAT a review committee comprising the CEO, Administrative Assistant, BGF Coordinator and M&E Coordinator, who should consider current project performance and implications for project delivery and results. The committee cannot make recommendation on a request without a quorum of 3 members to review it.

ii. If the budget line movement is more than 10% and will lead to significant changes in activities or the nature of the project, the internal committee should review, and make a recommendation to the Board for approval. The Board provides the final decision.

iii. If the budget line movement is more than 10% and does not lead to significant changes in activities or the nature of the project, the Secretariat committee can make the decision. The Board must be informed at the next Board meeting.

iv. If the request relates to a blue bond funded project, in both instances, these will be sent to the World Bank for final approval.
SeyCCAT’s Board and Executive team consider how the organisation can engage greater technical expertise to support development of projects inside and outside the BGF, the development of funding proposals, particularly in the areas of MPA management, marine science, aquaculture, fishing policy, and Blue Economy development. Suggested options for engaging this support:

- Fund a consultancy to undertake:
  - A national mapping of projects taking place in Seychelles related to SeyCCAT’s strategic areas of work (e.g.: GEF, SWIOFish3, EU)
  - A gap analysis of projects that are required but currently not funded related to SeyCCAT’s strategic areas
  - Outreach and research to identify examples of good practice nationally and globally
  - Development of a pipeline of project ideas, both large for external funding, and smaller projects suitable for BGF funding, that respond to gaps identified, with a 3–5-year outlook.

- Advertise for pro-bono technical advisors to join SeyCCAT for fixed periods, or to be available for advice in certain technical areas, when necessary, for example supporting the further development of project ideas identified in the pipeline. Target former BGF committee members and Seychelles academics.

- Where donor funding opportunities provide eligibility for such costs, invite academic organisations to partner with SeyCCAT, on new bids, requesting their engagement during proposal development.

SeyCCAT’s Board considers removing the restriction on BGF funding supporting individual sponsorships for participation in workshops, seminars, conferences, congresses, and considers the following becoming eligible under the BGF:

- Logistics and registration costs for attending seminars where project data or information is to be presented.
- Logistics and registration costs for, project leads or staff, for attending short workshops or seminars where there is a clear learning opportunity that could benefit implementation of the project. The grantee would be required to identify the learning opportunity in the proposal application documents. The approval process could be modified to include an option to approve a project with or without capacity building costs.
- Costs for short-term training courses that support continuing professional development (CPD) of relevance to a BGF project, for example dive training courses for survey staff.

SeyCCAT’s Board consider reviewing and raising the 15% cap in the use of debt swap proceeds, and of other financing designated to finance grant making, for operational costs, to help provide a sustainable base for the organisation, and resources to maintain the organisations efficiency. Options:

- Raising the cap to a maximum of 30% (to be further informed by the Business planning process).
- Amending SeyCCAT’s governing documents to reflect the ability of the Board to review and revise the cap as necessary.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Text</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>SeyCCAT’s M&amp;E Officer puts in place processes to gather data to report annually on the metrics described in the organisational Results Framework, and retrospectively populates the framework with data from 2018, 2019 and 2020. Data from annual reviews of SeyCCAT’s Results Framework is reported to the Grants Committee, Finance Committee and Board of Governors.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 16   | SeyCCAT’s Board and Executive team should consider what are the steps that need to be taken to encourage more organisations to partner on BGF projects, with focus on:  
  - International academic organisations to add technical expertise and experience.  
  - Fishers’ associations.  
  - National businesses – to engage more private sector implementing partners, and to promote philanthropic support for SeyCCAT projects. |
| 17   | SeyCCAT capitalizes on the opportunity that exists for it to act as a broker for further international funding opportunities that support national priorities in conservation and climate change adaptation, by strengthening relationships with government bodies and peer NGOs to promote the role of SeyCCAT in attracting funding and channelling it to these partners as implementers. |
Annex 1 – Review questions

The MTR focussed primarily on three OECD-DAC evaluation criteria, **effectiveness**, **efficiency**, and **coherence**, and the following questions:

1. **How effective** has SeyCCAT been in achieving the objectives of the Twenty22 strategy so far?
   - What results have been achieved in the period 2018-2020 and to what extent are the stated outputs and outcomes for the Twenty22 strategy on track?
   - What factors have affected (positively and negatively) the achievement of strategic objectives?
   - Are SeyCCAT projects effective in responding to the needs of stakeholders?
   - Are SeyCCAT projects effective in delivering conservation and social outcomes that stakeholders sought to achieve?
   - Has SeyCCAT prioritized all strategic areas of work appropriately and in a balanced way during the period under review and has there been any shift in its approach? Should SeyCCAT continue with these strategic focus areas, and is there evidence that any should be re-defined?
   - How has a long-term strategic document like the Twenty22 strategy been used during the recent COVID pandemic? Has it proven a document with suitable flexibility, or has it hampered the ability of SeyCCAT to respond effectively to emergency events?

2. **How efficient** are SeyCCAT’s systems and processes for delivery of the Twenty22 strategy?
   - Are the strategies and tools used in project development and implementation relevant to delivery of the project portfolio, and being used efficiently?
   - How efficient are the financial management and accountability structures of SeyCCAT in support of delivery of the project portfolio?
   - How have the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of SeyCCAT, identified in the Twenty22 strategy played out in respect to strategy delivery?
   - Is there a suitable M&E framework in place to support identification of targets and measurement of results?

3. **How coherent** has SeyCCAT’s approach to strategy been in the national and international context?
   - How have the trends in the external environment, identified in the Twenty22 strategy played out in respect to strategy delivery?
   - How does SeyCCAT relate to and coordinate with other institutions involved in similar areas of work? What partnerships have been leveraged in support of the strategic objectives?
   - Has there been an overlap or duplication of other similar interventions and what can be learnt from this?
## Annex 2 – Documents reviewed in meta-analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Document</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2019 - A Year in Review, SeyCCAT</td>
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<tr>
<td>2020 - A Year in Review, SeyCCAT</td>
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<tr>
<td>A Sustainable and Equitable Blue Recovery to the COVID-19 Crisis, World Resources Institute</td>
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<tr>
<td>Act 18 of 2015 Conservation and Climate Adaptation Trust of Seychelles Act, 2015</td>
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<tr>
<td>All project records (proposals, supporting documents, reports etc) for BGF rounds 1-4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Application data, BGF rounds 1-4</td>
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<tr>
<td>BGFS application summary feedback</td>
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<tr>
<td>Blue Endowment Fund - Feasibility Study</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Blue Grants Fund progress report 2017-19</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oceans 5 Project Proposal - Seychelles Protected Areas Implementation and Fisheries Reforms – Enabling the Seychelles’ Marine Spatial Plan.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Protected Area Finance Project summary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Request for Proposals - BGF#1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Request for Proposals - BGF#2</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Request for Proposals - BGF#3</td>
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<td>Request for Proposals - BGF#4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Request for Proposals - BGF#5</td>
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<tr>
<td>SeyCCAT annual workplans for 2018</td>
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<td>SeyCCAT annual workplans for 2019</td>
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<td>SeyCCAT annual workplans for 2020</td>
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<td>SeyCCAT annual workplans for 2021</td>
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<tr>
<td>SeyCCAT Blog: BGF4 - small grants awarded</td>
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<tr>
<td>SeyCCAT Blog: Can our impact continue during COVID-19</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>SeyCCAT Blog: Coastal Wetland and Climate Change Project</td>
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<tr>
<td>SeyCCAT Blog: Seagrass meadows competition</td>
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<tr>
<td>SeyCCAT Blog: Seagrass: earth’s best defence against climate change which you probably haven’t heard of</td>
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<td>SeyCCAT Blog: SeyCCAT commemorates 5th anniversary of Paris</td>
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<tr>
<td>SeyCCAT Blog: SeyCCAT is announcing a new SCR 150,000 grant that supports start-ups and entrepreneurs who advance conservation and sustainability practices in Seychelles</td>
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<tr>
<td>SeyCCAT Blog: SeyCCAT Surviving Crisis - COVID-19</td>
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<tr>
<td>SeyCCAT Blog: Should We Sacrifice Innovative Financing for the Blue Economy during the Global Pandemic?</td>
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<tr>
<td>SeyCCAT Blog: So far, a success:</td>
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<tr>
<td>SeyCCAT Blogs: Marine Spatial Plans</td>
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<tr>
<td>SeyCCAT Board Member list, and details of any sub-committees and their members</td>
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<tr>
<td>SeyCCAT Grants manual</td>
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<td>SeyCCAT investment policy</td>
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<td>SeyCCAT Operational manual</td>
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<tr>
<td>SeyCCAT Results Framework and Guide</td>
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<tr>
<td>SeyCCAT staff list inc. roles/titles or organigram</td>
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<tr>
<td>SeyCCAT Strategic Plan: Twenty22 - Internal Working Document</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seychelles National Development Strategy 2019 - 2023</td>
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<tr>
<td>Willingness to Pay Study Final Report</td>
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<tr>
<td>World Bank Press Release, Seychelle’s Launches World’s First Sovereign Blue Bond, Oct 29, 2018</td>
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</table>
### Annex 3 – Stakeholders interviewed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title and Organization</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mr Keith Andre</td>
<td>Chair, Fishing Boat Owners Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BGF Committee Former Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Adnan Awad</td>
<td>Africa Oceans Strategy Director, The Nature Conservancy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SeyCCAT Board Director and Finance Committee Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Ameer Ebrahim</td>
<td>Principal Fisheries Scientist, Seychelles Fishing Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chief Scientific Advisor, James Michel foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SeyCCAT Board Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Annike Faure</td>
<td>Project Manager, Coastal Wetlands and Climate Change project</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SeyCCAT</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr Frauke Fleisher-Dogley</td>
<td>CEO, Seychelles Islands Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SeyCCAT Board Observer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Kelly Hoareau</td>
<td>Director, Blue Economy Research Institute, University of Seychelles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BGF Committee Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Tom Hickey</td>
<td>Senior Officer, Protecting Coastal Wetlands and Coral Reefs, Pew Charitable Trusts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister Flavien Joubert</td>
<td>Minister for Environment, Energy and Climate Change, Seychelles Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SeyCCAT Board Chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Alvin Laurence</td>
<td>CEO, Citizens Engagement Platform (CEPS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Board Director, SeyCCAT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Marie-May Muzungaile</td>
<td>Director General, Biodiversity Conservation and Management</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Division, Ministry of Agriculture, Climate Change and Environment</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BGF Committee Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Angelique Pouponnneau</td>
<td>Chief Executive Officer, SeyCCAT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Vania Robert</td>
<td>Executive Assistant, SeyCCAT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Jan Robinson</td>
<td>SWIOFish3 Project Manager</td>
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<td>BGF Committee Observer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr Nirmal Shah</td>
<td>CEO, Nature Seychelles</td>
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<td>SeyCCAT Board Observer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms Helena Sims</td>
<td>Project Manager, Marine Spatial Plan initiative</td>
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<td>BGF Committee Member</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr Amit Wasserberg</td>
<td>Executive Director Silhouette Cruises</td>
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<td>SeyCCAT Board Director and Chair of the BGF Committee</td>
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<td>Seychelles Hospitality and Tourism Association Board Director</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr Rob Weary</td>
<td>SeyCCAT Board Former Treasurer, and Former Finance Committee Chair</td>
</tr>
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