



**MINISTRY OF TOURISM, CIVIL AVIATION, PORTS & MARINE**  
**TOURISM DEPARTMENT**

**EXPLANATORY NOTES FOR THE SEYCHELLES SECRETS**  
**PROGRAMME**



**July 2017**

## INTRODUCTION

The Seychelles Secrets is a set of standards applicable to licensed self-catering establishments, guesthouses and small hotels of less than 16 rooms, offering the best in authentic Creole hospitality, cuisine and culture. The criteria have been referenced from international standards, but their development has been applied to the local context of our tourism industry.

There will be three levels of award; Seychelles Secrets Bronze, Seychelles Secrets Silver and Seychelles Secrets Gold. This aims to make the label more inclusive by catering to a wider selection of small accommodation businesses while at the same time rewarding those establishments that make a greater effort to offer a product and service of a higher standard. The award will be determined by the number of points scored against the approved set of criteria.

Whether the property has earned a Bronze, Silver or Gold status, guests are assured that the rating has been awarded according to a set national standard.

The criteria consist of the four below components which are essential to today's travelers:

- **Physical:** the maintenance, condition and appearance of the establishment's facilities. This includes cleanliness which is of paramount importance to all guests.
- **Service:** A smile, a warm and genuine welcome and willingness to please and serve customers efficiently.
- **Sustainability:** Sustainable practices mainstreamed in the business operations.
- **Accessibility:** Caters to guests with special access needs including mobility, hearing and visual impairments.

## OBJECTIVES OF CLASSIFICATION PROGRAMME

Implementation of the Classification Programme assists the Tourism Department in achieving greater standardization and professionalism within the industry, as information regarding the quality and standards of tourism facilities and services is provided in a more structured and transparent manner.

- Potential visitors and travel operators alike are able to make informed decisions and choices and get the assurance that they/their clients will receive value for money.
- Sharpen the destination's image, as the programme acts as a primary marketing tool for the industry creating better awareness of the product offering.
- Works as a development tool to raise standards by providing operators with information on shortcomings and necessary improvements needed to maintain a grade or improve on it.
- Provide a control instrument to measure quality and sustainability.
- Acts as a benchmarking instrument which enhances fair competition.

## STATUTORY OBLIGATIONS

The establishment should be in compliance with all relevant statutory requirements including that of the Public Health Section, Fire & Rescue Services Agency, Seychelles Licensing Authority and Planning Authority.

## **IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

Assessments will be carried out by an officer from the Tourism Department to determine the establishment's standards as per our criteria. Establishments will be notified of upcoming visits in advance.

In cases where an establishment fails to qualify for at least the basic standard at the onset, the Department will advise the management on areas for improvement to rectify the deficiencies. The establishment may contact the Department upon completion of necessary actions to effect a re-assessment and the achieved rating will be awarded upon satisfactory compliance. An establishment not meeting at least the basic standard will be termed "Not graded".

For the recertification of an establishment after the 2 year validity period, an assessment will be carried out approximately four months prior to the expiry date of its certification.

## **MONITORING**

The Tourism Department will conduct surprise visits within the certification period for monitoring purposes. Establishments whose standards have dropped will be advised accordingly and a grace period will be given to address shortcomings. Where it is felt that an establishment is persistently not maintaining its standards in spite of recommendations from the Department, this establishment will be referred to the Classification Committee. The Committee may decide to suspend or revoke the award.

## **VALIDITY OF AWARD**

The award shall be valid for a period of 2 years from the date of issue, unless revoked by the Department.

## **AWARD**

A certificate will be awarded to establishments displaying their standard from Seychelles Secrets Bronze to Gold and it shall be displayed in a conspicuous place of the establishment. This will be at the cost of the Tourism Department. The award will also feature on the Seychelles Tourism Board website and other promotional materials.

## **CLASSIFICATION COMMITTEE**

The Tourism Department shall establish a Classification Committee appointed by the Minister responsible for tourism with the functions of reviewing and endorsing recommendations of the Department to award an establishment and attending to any other matters referred to it by the Department. Every member shall hold office for 2 years and may be eligible for re-appointment. The Committee shall meet every two months and at such times as may be decided by its Chairperson.

## **APPEALS**

The Tourism Department shall establish an Appeals Committee appointed by the Minister with the functions of reviewing all appeals made by establishments. The Minister shall also appoint a Chairperson from the members of the committee.

An establishment aggrieved by any decision of the Department and of the Classification Committee may within fourteen days of the notification of the decision make an appeal to the Appeals Committee. The Appeals Committee shall have twenty one days from the date of receipt of the appeal to review and give a decision to affirm or amend the decision of the Board.

## PENALTIES

A licensed accommodation who fails to display or market itself as per the standard awarded will be given a first warning in writing with a rectification period of 14 days. Failure to adhere to the notice will result in the temporary suspension or revocation of the award.

## SCORING

Small establishments in Seychelles encompasses a very wide range of products and differ in the facilities and services required. For example, a self-catering business is not required to provide meals as compared to a guesthouse or small hotel which will automatically have to provide these services.

As such, the Tourism Department has deemed it more appropriate to devise three separate criteria in order to cater for establishments with different product offering, to facilitate the interpretation of same and also to simplify the assessment process and its scoring system. Establishments will now be assessed using a specific assessment form for their appropriate category as per the below:

1. Small Hotels/ Fully-fledged Guesthouses (ie Guesthouses offering HB/FB)
2. Self-Catering
3. Bed & Breakfast Guesthouse

To note, whilst all self-catering establishments will be assessed using the criteria for self-catering, there will be two separate score sheets for establishments of 4 units and below and those above 4 units. This is important as the two groups of self-catering business are required to provide different facilities according to the regulations. A self-catering below 4 units is not required to provide a reception and public toilets whereas those above must provide these facilities.

The assessment forms are divided into main themes which are common in a tourism accommodation grading scheme and are specific to the category and services and facilities on offer as depicted in the below table. Each theme is further developed and consists of a number of components which describe either the existence or availability, quality and condition of the facility as well as the service offered.

<b>Small Hotel/Fully-Fledged Guesthouse</b>	<b>Self-Catering</b>	<b>Bed &amp; Breakfast Guesthouse</b>
1. Location, Access & Exterior	1. Location, Access & Exterior	1. Location, Access & Exterior
2. Safety & Security	2. Safety & Security	2. Safety & Security
3. Reception	3. Reception	3. Reception
4. Guest Bedrooms	4. Guest Units	4. Guest Bedrooms
5. Guest Bathrooms	5. Guest Bathrooms	5. Guest Bathrooms
6. Food & Beverage	6. Kitchenette	6. Food & Beverage
7. Kitchen	7. General	7. Kitchen
8. General		8. General

**TABLE 1**

The main themes cover the following aspects;

- **LOCATION, ACCESS & EXTERIOR** (natural beauty, the view, neighbourhood, access to the establishment, proximity to amenities in local e.g shops, restaurants etc. & first impression, cleanliness and interior decoration)
- **SAFETY & SECURITY** (safety & security procedures put in place)
- **RECEPTION SERVICE** (booking conditions & process, cancellation policy, online booking, telephone, a smile, a warm and genuine welcome and a willingness to please and serve customers)
- **GUEST BEDROOMS/UNITS** (cleanliness, comfort, interior decoration, facilities on offer)
- **BATHROOMS** (cleanliness, comfort, interior decoration)
- **FOOD & BEVERAGE** (general aspects, cleanliness, local food, entertainment, Crockery/cutlery, décor & furnishings)
- **KITCHEN/ KITCHENETTE** (cleanliness, fittings & equipment)
- **GENERAL** (cleanliness, staff appearance & friendliness, readiness to serve and help guests, internet facilities, laundry service, sustainable practices universal accessibility & maintenance)

For each criterion, an establishment can score between 0 and 3 points depending on their level of product offering and services available. The final scoring will be determined by a percentage bracket of the accumulation of points which the establishments has gained against the total possible score. The total possible score for the different categories and percentages required for each level are shown in the tables below;

<b>CATEGORIES OF ESTABLISHMENTS</b>	Small Hotel/ Fully fledged Guesthouse	Bed & Breakfast Guesthouse	Self-Catering 4+	Self-Catering
<b>MANDATORY</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>TOTAL POSSIBLE SCORE</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>120</b>

TABLE 2

<b>AWARD RATING</b>	<b>% SCORE BRACKET</b>	<b>SEYCHELLES SECRETS GRADING INDICATOR</b>
<b>Not Graded</b>	0%-34%	Not meeting minimum requirement
<b>BRONZE</b>	35%-49%	Comfortable and well-presented
<b>SLIVER</b>	50%-65%	Good level of quality and comfort
<b>GOLD</b>	66%-100%	Excellent standards throughout

TABLE 3

The below is an extract of the assessment criteria and its various components.

*Seychelles Secrets Assessment Form for Self Catering*

1	Location, Access and Exterior	Possible Score	Awarded Score	Remarks	Assessor's Remarks
1.1	<b>Location</b>				
	Located in secluded area or of exceptional natural beauty with superb views. In a quiet, secured neighbourhood. May be on the beach or with mountain view.	3	3		
	Located in a low density area. Quiet neighbourhood with easy access to amenities, beaches or areas of tourist attraction.	2			
	Located in a busy, medium to high density area.	1			
	<b>Max Points</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>		
1.2	<b>Access</b>				
	There must be appropriate signage to direct guests to the main entrance.	M			
	Signboard with full name of the hotel must be displayed in a prominent place. It must be in good condition.	M			
	Good, well maintained motor vehicle access (asphalt concrete surface), with adequate directional signage along the way where applicable.	3			

Description of the criteria components.

Main Theme

Mandatory Criteria (M); all establishments must comply with these; carries no points

Achieved Score

Assessment Form | Results | Results for below 4 units | Annex 1 | + | ⏪

**FLOW CHART FOR THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS**

