



**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION**

**NATIONAL POLICY FOR OPEN AND  
DISTANCE LEARNING**

**June 2015**

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## FOREWORD

The National Policy for Open and Distance Learning replaces the **National Distance/Open Learning Policy** launched in 2003.

The formulation of this Policy recognizes the importance of the potential of quality open and distance learning in human resources and sustainable development. It has taken place in the context of the following recent developments -

The publication of the *SADC Regional Open and Distance Learning Policy Framework (April 2012)* and the call for all SADC members to develop a National Policy on Open and Distance Learning.

The *National Employment Policy and Strategies (2014)* and the call for the promotion of a culture of training and development and lifelong learning in individuals and organization as one of its core functions;

The development of the *Information and Communications Technology in Education and Training Policy (2014)* as an action under the cross-cutting theme - *Enhancing the Role of ICT as a Tool for Complementing Teaching and Strengthening Management*, of the Medium Term Strategic Plan 2013 - 2017 and Beyond.

The call to revise and strengthen the policy and legal framework for lifelong learning and open and distance education under the cross-cutting theme *Lifelong Learning and Distance Education - 'Fostering Lifelong Learning for Employability and Productivity'* of the Medium Term Strategic Plan 2013 - 2017 and Beyond.

The Policy has benefitted from the engagement of many stakeholders and technical and financial assistance from Commonwealth of Learning (COL).

Through this Policy, the Ministry of Education seeks to provide an enabling framework to enhance flexible access to realistic, relevant, quality assured and affordable programmes of learning through modes that offer realistic chances of success to the diversity of learners enrolled on ICT-related programmes.

It also provides a framework for enhancing the provisioning and expanding of alternative quality access to education and training to assist in meeting the

national goal of knowledge-based economy, within the context of sustainable development.

The Policy further provides an agreed framework for the development of a comprehensive Strategic Plan to serve as a roadmap to guide the harmonized integrated and co-ordinated provisioning and expanding of open and distance learning strategy to contribute to human resource and sustainable development.

I call on the commitment and engagement of all stakeholders in the process of implementation of this Policy.

Minister for Education

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The National Policy for Open and Distance Learning is the result of wide consultation involving a variety of government and non-government stakeholders to whom I would like to express my sincere appreciation and gratitude.

The Ministry is also grateful for the valuable support and assistance of the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) expressed through the financial assistance for the process and the technical assistance of Dr Godson Gatsha, the lead facilitator for the Consultative Workshop.

The Ministry of Education recognizes the substantial contribution of the Core Team for ensuring the smooth administration of the consultative workshop and the validation process towards the formulation of the Policy.

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## DEFINITIONS

### 1) **Competence**

Knowledge, skills, attitudes and personal attributes combined with the underlying understanding to perform all or some of the functions of an occupation or profession.

### 2) **Distance Education**

A system of learning and teaching that is grounded in the principles of open and resource-based learning and takes place in different contexts at a multiplicity of sites, through a variety of mechanisms and learning and teaching approaches.

### 3) **Education Information Management System**

Centralised computerised system designed to organise information related to education and training. The functions of EMIS include the collection, processing, publication, dissemination and rendering of information services on important parameters of education and training such as data related to student numbers, human resources, institutional assets, and student progression. The processed data provide diagnostic information to a centralised authority to facilitate effective planning, decisions-making, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the education and training system.

### 4) **Inclusive Education**

An approach to teaching and learning based on a philosophy and pedagogical practices that allow each learner to feel respected, confident and safe so as to better promote the development of his or her full potential.

### 5) **Information Communications Technology**

A diverse set of technological tools and resources used to communicate, and to create, disseminate, store and manage information. These technologies include computers, the internet, broadcasting technologies

(radio and television), and telephony (including mobile phones) and other portable devices.

**6) Knowledge Based Economy**

An economy where organisations, and people acquire, create, disseminate knowledge more effectively for greater economic and social development

**7) Lifelong learning**

The process of sourcing out new knowledge or continuous development of one's competencies over the course of a person's life.

**8) National Qualifications Framework**

A framework of regulations, policies and tools developed to regulate the development recognition and award of qualifications based on standards of competence to be acquired by learners.

**9) Open and Educational Resources**

Educational and training materials, usually in digital form, that are shared freely and openly for anyone to use some type of licence. OER materials can be repurposed, improved and redistributed.

**10) Programme Performance Based Budgeting**

A strategic management tool that links financial resources to performance measurement and resource management at the organisational level.

**11) Policy**

An official commitment of the authority to the vision, mission, principles, goals and objectives expressed in a document which an organisation adopts for a given area and strategically intends to implement.

**12) Qualification**

The formal recognition of a learner's achievement of the required number and range of credits or other requirements at a specified level of the National Qualifications Framework

### **13)Quality Assurance**

A process of establishing and confirming the sustainability of conditions in place for learners to achieve the required standards.

### **14) Seychelles Qualifications Authority**

The regulatory body established to formulate and implement the National Qualifications Framework.

### **15)Strategy**

The adopted course of action considered necessary to defined components of a policy. It is a specific way of combining institutions, time, staff, laws, regulations, procedures, etc. in order to achieve the policy components. It may be further detailed resulting in an implementation plan with numerous objectives, time-frames resources and outcomes.

### **16)Tertiary Education**

Education and training provided after the secondary stage of education.



## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACCRONYMS

ALDEC -	Adult Learning and Distance Education Centre
COL -	Commonwealth of Learning
EMIS -	Education Management and Information Systems
ICT -	Information Communication Technology
NQF -	National Qualifications Framework
ODL -	Open and Distance Learning
OER -	Open Educational Resources
PPBB -	Programme Performance Based Budgeting
SADC -	Southern African Development Community
SIDS -	Small Island Developing States
SQA -	Seychelles Qualifications Authority
UNISA -	University of South Africa

## SECTION ONE

### 1.0 Overview of Open and Distance Learning in the National Context

#### 1.1 Overview of Open and Distance Learning (ODL) in National Development

Open and Distance Learning (ODL) has been in existence in Seychelles for the last four decades. International educational institutions such as Edith Cowan University (Australia) Indira National Open University (India), the University of South Africa and the University of Trois Rivieres (Canada) have long delivered programmes through the distance education mode in Seychelles. The participation of international educational institutions has over the years influenced the development of ODL in the country. Over the years various publications have acknowledged open and distance learning as another mode of delivering education and training in Seychelles other than conventional formal education. These included *The National I.C.T Policy (2005)*, *The National Human Resources Development Policy (2005)* and *the Seychelles Integrated National Human Resources Development Strategy – Towards a Knowledge-Based Society (2007)*. *The National Employment Policy and Strategies (2014)* is the latest such publications.

#### 1.2 Overview of Open and Distance Learning in Education and Training

The Ministry of Education has long embraced Open and Distance Learning.

The Ministry's Policy Statement '*Education for a Learning Society (2000)*' highlights the importance of Open and Distance Learning as a teaching and learning strategy for expanding access to education and training at all levels.

The first policy on Open and Distance Learning was formulated in 2003 and its implementation was co-ordinated by the Adult Learning and

Distance Education Centre (ALDEC) established in 1999 as part of the 1998/1999 Education Reform Agenda.

Both the Education Act (2004) and the Tertiary Education Act (2011) promote the development and deployment of open and distance learning in public and private educational and training institutions.

The history and experience in co-operating with international open and learning institutions including the on-going Memorandum of Understanding between the University of South Africa (UNISA) and the Adult Learning and Distance Education (ALDEC) has provided for the Ministry of Education to embrace open and distance learning as part of the education and training system. This provides more accessible, flexible and cost effective education and training opportunities to achieve the goals for, lifelong learning, particularly adult learning, and professional development in the promotion of sustainable development.

In the *Education Sector Medium Term Strategic Plan 2013 – 2017 and Beyond*, open and distance learning is viewed as a critical cross-cutting theme in fostering a culture of lifelong learning and a driving force for learning for sustainable development. It is further regarded as important for skills development or training for employability purposes. Additionally, the *Education Policy on Information Communications Technology Education and Training Policy (2014)* provides an enabling policy environment for facilitating the further provision and expansion of open and distance learning.

From a regional perspective, the publication of the *SADC Regional and Distance Open Learning Policy Framework (2012)* and the call for all SADC member states to develop a National Policy on Open and Distance Learning as per the related Strategic Plan has provided the added justification for the Ministry to review its policy framework on open and distance learning, formulated some twelve years ago.

### 1.3 Rationale of the Policy

The Policy is in response to the need for a more rationalized, harmonized, integrated and co-ordinated approach to the provision and expansion of open and distance learning, given its recognized potential to contribute to human resources development and sustainable development.

It provides an agreed, common and transparent framework of essential elements that need to be effectively addressed to facilitate the successful implementation of open and distance learning, as an integral component of the national education and training system.

### 1.4 Structure of the Policy

The structure of the National Policy for Open and Distance Learning follows the policy template of the Ministry of Education and is in harmony with education and training policies developed as of 2014. The structure is guided by the Regional Open and Distance Learning Policy Framework (2012) adopted by SADC member states of which Seychelles is a member.

The Policy is organized into the following four sections.

<b>Section One</b>	Overview of Open and Distance Learning in the National Context.
<b>Section Two</b>	Policy Framework: Vision, Mission Purpose and Scope, Guiding Principles and Values.
<b>Section Three</b>	Strategic Policy Goal and Policy Statements
<b>Section Four</b>	Actioning, Monitoring and Review of the Policy - Institutional Framework for Implementation and Review of the Policy.

## SECTION TWO

### 2.0 Policy Framework – Vision, Mission, Purpose and Scope, Guiding Principles and Values

#### 2.1 Vision Statement

Fostering a culture of lifelong learning for all through accessible, quality assured, relevant, affordable and sustainable open and distance learning opportunities.

#### 2.2 Mission Statement

Enhancing the provision of accessible, quality assured, flexible, relevant, affordable and sustainable open and distance learning opportunities to the highest attainable level.

#### 2.3 Purpose Statement

The purpose of the Policy is to provide national guidelines for the institutionalization and operationalisation of open and distance learning as viable integral component of the education and training system. It will also contribute to human resources and assist in promoting sustainable development and in meeting the goal of a knowledge-based economy. More specifically, the Policy seeks to:

- facilitate and increase access to quality education for all and skills development;
- provide greater opportunities for lifelong learning for all and the development of a knowledge-based society, irrespective of gender, age, background, social and physical status;
- provide a more coordinated approach to education and lifelong learning;
- mainstream open and distance learning as a means of achieving education for all at all levels;
- promote lifelong learning to achieve the vision of a knowledge-based society;

- contribute towards the harmonization of education and training nationally and regionally;
- promote access to learning for sustainable development.

## 2.4 Scope

This Policy promotes open and distance learning as a viable mode of delivery. It seeks to enable learners from all levels of education and training, including out-of-school youths and adults, unemployed and employed to utilize open distance learning to successfully attain their educational goals, knowledge, competencies, skills and enhance their employability opportunities, productivity levels, self-esteem and self-actualisation in a flexible and affordable manner.

## 2.5 Guiding Principles and Values

The Policy is premised on the following ten (10) principles and values:

*2.5.1 Accessibility:* The education system shall ensure that programmes on offer and the mode of learning and facilities used can be accessed by all learners.

*2.5.2 Collaboration and Partnership:* Open and Distance Learning providers shall promote collaboration and establish partnership for programme development, acquisition of resources, teacher and learner support, exchange programmes, quality assurance and certification.

*2.5.3 Cost Effectiveness and Sustainability:* Open and Distance Learning providers shall seek to promote cost effective access to learning opportunities in the development and deployment of open and distance learning and, shall consider the long-term nature of diverse experiences needed.

- 2.5.4 *Equity*: Open and Distance Learning providers shall ensure the enhancement of the conditions for optimum achievement by every individual or groups, including the gifted, the slow learner and the learning disabled; and for both genders to succeed.
- 2.5.5 *Flexibility*: Open and Distance Learning providers shall promote flexibility in the provision of open and distance learning and ensure that the related institutional structures are dynamic and respond to the ever changing demands and needs of the learners.
- 2.5.6 *Learner Centeredness*: Open and Distance Learning providers shall ensure that the learner is at the centre of all the activities ensuring that the environment is conducive to learning and that basic resources are at his/her disposal.
- 2.5.7 *Openness*: Open and Distance Learning providers shall ensure reduction of barriers to entry/access to programmes they offer.
- 2.5.8 *Quality and Relevance*: Programme development and delivery shall be characterized by the highest standards and relevant to the context of national economic development and human resource needs.
- 2.5.9 *Harmonisation and Standardisation*: Open and Distance Learning opportunities shall be provided through harmonized national policies and guidelines and in an environment of acceptable standards, ethics, and measures for the protection of learners.
- 2.5.10 *Ethics and Professionalism*: Open and Distance Learning providers shall ensure that the services are provided

efficiently, with honesty, transparency, integrity and professionalism.



## SECTION THREE

### 3.0 Policy Focus Areas, Policy Statements and Interventions

The Policy recognises the multi-dimensional nature of the issues that have a bearing on the effective development of open and distance learning.

The Policy identifies the following thirteen (13) – Strategic Focus Areas below.

- (i) Leadership, Governance and Management
- (ii) Staffing, Training and Development
- (iii) Public Perception of Open and Distance Learning
- (iv) Institutional Capacity
- (v) Funding, Budgeting and Financial Resources Mobilisation
- (vi) Research, Development and Dissemination
- (vii) Application of Information Communications Technology in Open and Distance Learning
- (viii) Inclusive Education and Training
- (ix) Collaboration, Networking and Partnership
- (x) Programme Relevance and Sustainability
- (xi) Learner Support Services
- (xii) Quality Assurance and Qualifications
- (xiii) Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting

For each of the Strategic Focus Areas, the following are elaborated- main issues and challenges, policy statement and interventions.

It is through the successful implementation of all the identified policy statements that significant improvement will be achieved for the sustainable provision and expansion of the open and distance learning landscape.

### **3.1 Strategic Policy Area One - Leadership, Governance and Management.**

#### **3.1.1 Issues and Challenges**

There is no clear leadership, governance structure and management system for open and distance learning nationally.

The leadership, governance and management structures that exist do not have the necessary framework and capacity to adequately lead, and respond to the development of mainstreaming open and distance learning.

Additionally, the governance and management systems in place do not adequately provide for the flexibility and timely responses often required by forward-looking open and distance learning systems. Open and distance learning initiatives tend to take place as peripheral activities in essentially conventional training setting with no co-ordination across the institutions.

#### **3.1.2 Strategic Policy Statement**

Government through the Ministry of Education undertakes to strengthen the leadership, and capacity of the open and distance learning governance and management systems structures that will better facilitate the institutionalization and open and distance learning as a viable means of optimizing the provision of education, skills development and lifelong learning for all.

#### **3.1.3 Strategic Interventions**

The Strategic Statement shall be facilitated through the following core interventions: -

- 3.1.3.2 establishment of a tertiary education and training institution as a focal point for the promotion, development and championing of open and distance learning;
- 3.1.3.3 development of an efficient governance structure and management systems for open and distance learning;
- 3.1.3.4 on-going development of human resource capacity in leadership, governance and change management for open and distance learning services and programmes.

## **3.2 Strategic Policy Area Two – Staffing, Training and Development**

### **3.2.1 Issues and Challenges**

Institutions providing open and distance learning have inadequate open and distance learning trained personnel.

Although some of the personnel at these institutions have been trained or sensitized in open and distance learning, there is no up to date database on open and distance learning trained personnel, no focal co-ordination point, no documented framework for the on-going capacity building and opportunities to cascade the learning and experiences and an up to date framework for the implementation of staff training and development in open and distance learning.

### **3.2.2 Strategic Policy Statement**

The Government through the Ministry of Education shall ensure that in line with the Ministry's Strategic goal for the recruitment deployment, development and retention of teaching personnel, institutions providing open and distance learning have adequate trained open and distance learning-trained personnel for the successful implementation of the services and programmes.

### **3.2.3 Strategic Interventions**

The Strategic Statement shall be facilitated through the following core interventions:

- 3.2.3.1 establishment and maintaining of an up-to-date database on the status of training, experience and competence profile of open and distance learning personnel;
- 3.2.3.2 development and implementation of a robust training plan for the sustainability of open and distance learning as a viable mode of delivery;
- 3.2.3.3 recruitment of sufficient number of adequately trained and experienced open and distance learning personnel.

3.2.3.4 development and maintaining of a personnel manual including the framework on the remuneration of the different categories of open and distance learning personnel.

### **3.3 Strategic Policy Focus Area Three – Public Perception of Open and Distance Learning.**

#### **3.3.1 Issues and Challenges**

Despite the implementation of distance education in Seychelles dates as far back as the nineteen-seventies and long before that worldwide, the local education community and the public in general, tend to perceive qualifications obtained through open and distance learning to be of lower standard compared to that received through conventional education mode of delivery.

#### **3.3.2 Strategic Policy Statement**

The Government through the Ministry of Education and in line with the its goal on Open and Distance Learning shall promote open and distance learning and the recognition of qualifications that meet the national quality standards established by the National Qualifications Framework.

#### **3.3.3 Strategic Interventions**

The Strategic Policy Statement shall be facilitated through the following core interventions –

3.3.3.1 implementation of marketing and awareness strategies for promoting the benefits of open and distance learning amongst stakeholders and partners.

3.3.3.2 Ensuring that programmes of open and distance learning lead to qualifications that are recognized on the National Qualifications Framework.

## **3.4 Strategic Policy Focus Area Four – Institutional Capacity**

### **3.4.1 Issues and Challenges**

Education and training institutions providing open and distance learning opportunities are not able to adequately meet the demands for programmes and services due to their insufficient capacity in various parameters of the resources necessary for quantitative and qualitative provision of the service.

### **3.4.2 Strategic Policy Statement**

Government through the Ministry of Education shall improve and enhance the capacity of institutions which deliver programmes and services through open and distance learning mode for both emerging and future needs.

### **3.4.3 Strategic Interventions**

The Strategic Policy Statement shall be facilitated through the following core interventions:

- 3.4.3.1 provide appropriate and adequate physical and technological facilities to open and distance learning institutions;
- 3.4.3.2 provide adequate financial and teaching and learning resources to open and distance learning institutions;
- 3.4.3.3 promote the development of sustainable strategic public and private partnerships for the expansion of open and distance learning services.

### **3.5 Strategic Policy Focus Area Five – Funding, Budgeting and Financial Resources Mobilisation**

#### **3.5.1 Issues and Challenges**

Despite its relative long history in Seychelles, the development of open and distance learning has been constrained by inadequate funding.

Additionally, the mechanism for financial resource mobilisation has not facilitated the sourcing of non-government funds for the development of open and distance learning.

#### **3.5.2 Strategic Policy Statement**

The Government through the Ministry of Education and in line with the Programme Performance Based Budgeting (PPBB) approach being implemented, shall allocate adequate funds for the provision of open and distance learning and shall facilitate the mobilisation of additional funds by ODL institutions to supplement government funding.

#### **3.5.3 Strategic Interventions**

The Strategic Policy Statement shall be facilitated through the following core interventions:

- 3.5.3.1 The integration of the budget for open and distance learning and the development of an appropriate funding formula for the adequate funding of open and distance programmes and services;
- 3.5.3.2 The adoption of financial regulations and procedures that facilitate financial resources mobilisation and use by open and distance learning institutions to supplement the government allocation.

### **3.6 Strategic Policy Focus Area Six – Research, Development and Dissemination**

#### **3.6.1 Issues and Challenges**

There is inadequate research development in open and distance learning nationally. Where research has been undertaken, it has remained internal to the institution with limited dissemination of findings.

Additionally, access to funding for research is limited.

#### **3.6.2 Strategic Policy Statement**

The Government through the Ministry of Education shall promote and facilitate open and distance learning research development and dissemination of research findings in partnership with national, regional and international stakeholders.

#### **3.6.3 Strategic Interventions**

The Strategic Policy Statement shall be facilitated through the following core interventions: –

- 3.6.3.1 Fund allocation for open and distance learning research;
- 3.6.3.2 Capacity building in open and distance learning research;
- 3.6.3.3 Establishment of a research repository within the open and distance learning focal institution;
- 3.6.3.4 The development of ‘platforms’ for publication and sharing of open and distance learning research findings.

### **3.7 Strategic Policy Focus Area Seven – Application of Information Communications Technology in Open and Distance Learning**

#### **3.7.1 Issues and Challenges**

There is insufficient availability and inadequate capacity of information communications technology infrastructure to increase access to and enhance the quality of delivery of open and distance learning programmes;

### **3.7.2 Strategic Policy Statement**

The Government through the Ministry of Education and in line with the *Policy on Information Communications Technology (2014)* shall facilitate enhanced availability, capacity and utilization of information and technology for the efficient and effective delivery of programmes and services through open and distance learning mode.

### **3.7.3 Strategic Interventions**

The Strategic Policy Statement shall be facilitated through the following core interventions: -

- 3.7.3.1 sustenance and enhancement of appropriate information communication technology infrastructure;
- 3.7.3.2 improvement of information communication technology competence of staff and learners of institutions offering open and distance learning programmes and services;
- 3.7.3.3 adoption and use of relevant mix of technologies to cater for the diverse needs of the learners;
- 3.7.3.4 adoption and use of relevant mix of open and distance learning programmes including Open Education Resources (OER) to cater for the diverse needs of the learners.

## **3.8 Strategic Policy Focus Area Eight – Inclusive Education and Training**

### **3.8.1 Issues and Challenges**

Inclusive education and training is not adequately integrated in programmes and services provided through open and distance learning. There is limited information regarding inclusive practice in programmes delivered through open and distance learning or about various categories of learners who have experienced learning through open and distance learning.



### **3.8.2 Strategic Policy Statement**

Government through the Ministry of Education and in line with the *Inclusive Education Policy (2014)* shall facilitate inclusivity of programmes and services and enhance the conditions for optimum access to these programmes and services by all categories of learners.

### **3.8.3 Strategic Interventions**

The Strategic Policy Statement shall be facilitated through the following core interventions –

- 3.8.3.1 programmes delivered through open and distance learning shall be accessed through the decentralization of facilities, resources and services to better meet the diversity of learner needs;
- 3.8.3.2 improved programmes of sensitization on the entitlement of all categories of learners to programmes and services offered through open and distance learning;
- 3.8.3.3 provide appropriate learner support strategies for programmes and services offered through open and distance learning mode to better meet the diverse needs of learners.

## **3.9 Strategic Policy Focus Area Nine – Collaboration, Networking and Partnership**

### **3.9.1 Issues and Challenges**

There is inadequate collaboration, networking and partnership between institutions offering programmes through open and distance learning mode nationally, across the region and internationally.

Additionally, there is limited utilization of existing resource capacities in open and distance learning within the region.

### **3.9.2 Strategic Policy Statement**

Government through the Ministry of Education shall promote and support collaboration, networking and partnership in the development and deployment of cost-effective programmes and services through open and distance learning.

### **3.9.3 Strategic Interventions**

The Strategic Policy Statement shall be facilitated through the following core interventions –

- 3.9.3.1 establish frameworks to facilitate collaboration and partnership in the development and delivery of open and distance learning at national, regional and international levels;
- 3.9.3.2 establish frameworks to enhance the sharing of information and best practices at national, regional and international levels;
- 3.9.3.3 establish frameworks to facilitate private public partnership in the development and delivery of open and distance learning within, across the region and internationally.

## **3.10 Strategic Policy Focus Area Ten – Programme Relevance and Sustainable Development**

### **3.10.1 Issues and Challenges**

Open and Distance learning programmes on offer do not adequately provide for the diversity of labour market needs and the national sustainable development needs in the context of Small Island Developing States.

Existing open and distance learning programmes do not adequately take account of knowledge and skills and values that contribute to healthy livelihood, adaptation and mitigation of climate change and other aspects of sustainable development

### **3.10.2 Strategic Policy Statement**

The Government through the Ministry of Education shall in line with the relevant national frameworks on employment and sustainable development, increase access to open and distance learning programmes that better respond to the labour market needs and give greater consideration to the national sustainable development needs.

### **3.10.3 Strategic Interventions**

The Strategic Policy Statement shall be facilitated through the following core interventions -

3.10.3.1 development, adoption or adaptation of open and distance learning programmes which are better informed by labour market analysis and needs.

3.10.3.2 integration of sustainable development principles, concepts and practices in small island developing states (SIDS), in the administration and delivery of open and distance learning programmes.

## **3.11 Strategic Policy Area Eleven – Learner Support Services**

### **3.11.1 Issues and Challenges**

Open and distance learners, in particular those with no experience of learning through distance mode need adequate support to succeed.

Institutions offering open and distance learning programmes and services have limited capacity and inadequate learner support systems to provide appropriate learner support services for the diversity of learners.

### **3.11.2 Strategic Policy Statement**

The Government through the Ministry of Education shall facilitate the institutionalization of cost-effective, appropriate and responsive learner

support systems to enhance the quality and success of open and distance learning delivery and of the learners following the programmes.

### **3.11.3 Strategic Interventions**

The Strategic Policy Statement shall be facilitated through the following core interventions:

3.11.3.1 establishment and implementation of appropriate learner support systems for providing learner support services.

3.11.3.2 enhancement of institutional human resource capacity to provide quality learner support services that meet the diverse needs of the learners.

## **3.12 Strategic Policy Area Twelve – Quality Assurance and Qualifications**

### **3.12.1 Issues and Challenges**

Institutions providing open and distance learning programmes and services do not have an effective quality assurance system for these programmes and services.

Only a limited number of locally developed open and distance learning programmes have validation status from the Seychelles Qualifications Authority (SQA).

The National Qualifications Framework (NQF) does not adequately cater for the delivery of programmes offered through open and distance learning mode.

### **3.12.2 Strategic Policy Statement**

The Government through the Ministry of Education and the Seychelles Qualifications Authority shall enhance its support for the development and improvement of quality assurance mechanisms and frameworks for open and distance learning programmes.

### **3.12.3 Strategic Interventions**

The Policy Statement shall be facilitated through the following core interventions –

- 3.12.3.1 institutionalisation of quality assurance mechanism and systems in line with the Seychelles Qualifications Authority’s quality assurance mechanism to better guide the development, monitoring, implementation and evaluation of open and distance learning ODL programmes.
- 3.12.3.2 facilitation of the development and offering of validated open and distance learning programmes by open and distance learning institutions.
- 3.12.3.3 further elaboration of the SQA’s quality assurance mechanism to better guide and facilitate the development, and adoption of open and distance learning programmes of credible quality and standards comparable to programmes not offered through open and distance mode.

### **3.13 Strategic Policy Focus Area Thirteen – Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting**

#### **3.13.1 Issues and Challenges**

There is weak institutional monitoring, evaluation and reporting mechanisms and systems including defined indicators.

There is also an absence of comprehensive monitoring, evaluation and reporting systems in line with the Ministry of Education’s defined Education Management and Information System (EMIS).

### **3.13.2 Strategic Policy Statement**

Government, through the Ministry of Education and in line with the Education Sector Medium Term Strategic Plan 2013 – 2017, shall establish a national monitoring, evaluation, and reporting framework with defined indicators, to guide the establishment and institutionalization of similar frameworks at the level of institutions of open and distance learning to better track, evaluate and report on the performance of open and distance learning institutions.

### **3.13.3 Strategic Interventions**

The Strategic Policy Statement shall be facilitated through the following core interventions: –

- 3.13.3.1 establishment of a national monitoring, evaluation and reporting framework;
- 3.13.3.2 development of institutional monitoring and evaluation framework in line with the national framework.
- 3.13.3.3 Systematic monitoring and reporting on the progress and delivery of programmes and services offered through open and distance learning mode.

## SECTION FOUR

### 4.0 Actioning, Monitoring and Review of the Policy

The successful actioning of the strategic policy statement calls for sustained national and individual support, ownership and commitment from a diversity of key stakeholders at the level of the government, private sector and non-state partners.

At the level of the Ministry of Education the engagement of the Minister, Principal Secretaries, Directors General and Heads of institutions offering Open and Distance Learning will be essential.

The implementation and monitoring of the strategic interventions will be facilitated through a Steering Committee with defined Terms of Reference and Implementation Plan.

The Policy shall come into effect in July 2015. It will be subjected to periodic monitoring and review in the light of changes that may impact on the content of the Policy

A full review of the Policy shall be undertaken after five (5) years of implementation.