



MINISTRY OF HOUSING, INFRASTRUCTURE AND LAND TRANSPORT

SEYCHELLES PLANNING AUTHORITY

Policies and Guidelines Library

COMMUNICATIONS ANTENNA POLICY

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1.0 SUMMARY

While there is tremendous benefits to draw from the convenience of personal wireless facilities from home, business and emergency services, the configuration and nature of these wireless communication facilities, we must admit that the manner they are dispersed in Seychelles, provide grounds for impacting effects. In our local context the impacts are in the form of; detract (*take away part of*) from the natural beauty and tropical scenic resources of the islands; a source of opposition from concerned neighbors as to the placement of personal wireless facilities on nearby residential property; the incompatibility with residential land uses; capability of scaring and disrupting nearby residential and scenic area, and thereby decreasing property values; and diverging from existing and usual patterns of development.

The location of wireless facilities within the country is a matter of national resource management. Seychelles economy as we know it, is highly dependent on the tourism industry and in return we rely heavily on the untouched and natural beauty of our islands to attract visitor to our shores. It is paramount therefore that while we draw benefits from communication facilities, our beautiful natural landscape is also spared from any unsightly telecommunications facilities throughout the republic.

2.0 STATEMENT

Our country now embraces numerous wireless communication providers and in order not to adversely compromise the beauty of our natural landscape while fully

understanding the need for communications facilities, the siting of these facilities has to be done in the most effective and economic manner.

3.0 PURPOSE

This policy/guidelines set out a framework to adequately address this with emphasis on wireless communication infrastructure sharing by all parties.

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for the siting of towers and antennas. However, the goals are as follows:

1. To encourage the location of towers in non-residential areas and thus minimizing the total number of towers throughout the islands.
2. To encourage users of towers to locate them, as far as practicable, in areas where adverse impact on the community is minimal.
3. To encourage users of towers to configure them in a way that minimizes the adverse visual impact of towers and antennas. That is, the selection of sites with existing natural screen such as woodlands, large parks and forests, rather than areas which are at strategic points, totally exposed or of considerable natural beauty.
4. To delegate co-location of existing tower sites where technically and economically feasible.
5. To enhance the ability of telecommunication service providers to provide their services to the public more effectively and efficiently.

4.0 BACKGROUND

Wireless communications facilities referred above come in many forms (shapes and sizes) with the most common being the familiar tall towers/antenna set up. Such system would normally have an antenna and some type of supporting structure, often called an antenna tower. Most have their own integral mast so that they can be fastened directly to a building or a tower. There is normally a certain measure of flexibility in the placement of antenna systems which is constrained to some degree by: the need to achieve acceptable coverage for the service area; the availability of sites; technical limitations; and safety. In exercising its mandate, the authority believes that it is important that antenna systems to be deployed in a manner that considers the local surroundings but will not create bad visual impact on the immediate surroundings.

With more people than ever using wireless devices such as smartphones and tablet PCs demanding more services and faster data, we need increasingly more towers to meet the demand. But agreeably the demand for service has to be balanced with the needs of Seychellois and their communities. Therefore, it is paramount that

companies wanting to build towers to first look at sharing existing structures or infrastructure.

Since antenna systems can handle a limited number of calls or data traffic at once, there are more towers and other antenna structures in high population areas. In some areas, towers are located farther apart but in dense urban areas, they will be closer together. This calls for steps to be taken to balance the increasing demand for wireless services with the needs of neighborhoods and communities across the country.

Our citizens want faster and more accessible service so they can reliably use their wireless devices to keep in touch with loved ones and stay informed. Businesses, emergency services and air navigation systems also depend on radio communications and wireless services 24-hours-a-day. This requires towers, located in the right places.

5.0 APPLICABILITY & SCOPE

The Seychelles Planning Authority and all other responsible arms of Government. These are applicable to all developments defined in the Physical Development legislation.

6.0 POLICY STATEMENTS

6.1 GENERAL GUIDELINES AND REQUIREMENTS:

(i) Inventory of Existing Towers

All radio and telecommunications service providers and broadcasters are required to provide the Authority/Ministry with an inventory of its existing towers including specification information about the location with local grid coordinates, heights and design of each tower. The Authority/Ministry may share such information with other applicants seeking to locate similar towers. However, the Authority/Ministry is not, by sharing such information, in any way representing or warranting that such sites are available or suitable.

(ii) Approval Process

Process of evaluating proposals for personal wireless facilities is to encourage opportunities for co-location of equipment. Therefore prior to approval, others licensees of similar services will be notified regarding the use of the property for the purpose of siting personal wireless facilities.

If there are no existing structures that can be shared or used, a company may apply with the Authority to begin the process of building a tower. Service providers will be required to:

- clearly notify and consult residents when a commercial tower of any height is planned and address their concerns;
- meet the reasonable and relevant requirements of the Planning Authority
- adhere to the Government's technical and safety requirements and international standards for towers; and
- Build any new approved tower within a timeframe to be specified by the approving authority.

(iii) Aesthetics and Lighting

The following guidelines govern the aesthetics and lighting of towers.

- (a) Towers shall be painted in adherence to the International Regulations and Standards of Annex 14 of the Chicago Convention, which is also the accepted national standard.
- (b) At the tower site, the design of the buildings and related structures, apart from the tower itself, shall to extent possible use materials, colors, textures, screening, innovative camouflaging techniques and landscaping that will blend the tower facilities to the natural settings and built environment.
- (c) For antennas installed on a structure other than a tower, the antenna and supporting electrical and mechanical equipment must be of a neutral color that is identical to, or closely compatible with, the color of the supporting structure so as to make the antenna and related equipment as visually unobtrusive as possible.
- (d) Towers shall not be artificially lighted unless required by the Seychelles Civil Aviation Authority (SCAA). If it is required, SCAA may review the available lighting alternatives and approve the design that would cause the least disturbance to the surrounding views.

(iv) Landscaping

The following are requirements with regards to landscaping the surrounding of the tower. These requirements may be waived by the Ministry if the goals of this policy would be better served.

- (a) Tower facilities shall be landscaped with a buffer of plant materials that effectively screens the view of the tower compound from adjacent public ways, public property and residential property. The standard buffer comprises of a landscaped strip of at least 1.5m wide outside the perimeter of the compound.
- (b) In locations where visual impact of the tower would be minimal, the landscaping requirement may be reduced or waived altogether,

- (c) Existing mature tree growth and natural land forms on the site shall be preserved to the maximum extent possible. At some large tower sites, the natural growth of large trees around the property perimeter may provide a sufficient buffer.

(v) Government Requirements

- (a) All towers must meet or exceed current standards and regulations set by the relevant authorities that regulates towers and antennas. If such standards and regulations are changed, then the owners of the towers and antennas governed by this policy shall bring such towers and antennas into compliance with such revised standards and regulations within 6 months of the effective date of such standards and regulations. Failure to bring towers and antennas into compliance with such revised standards and regulations shall constitute grounds for the removal of the tower or antenna at the owner's expense. In addition, approval must be sought from SCAA to ensure compliance to the national standards on lighting and color coding of towers.
- (b) Prior to the issuance of approval, the Ministry shall determine that the new personal wireless facility will not interfere with any existing communication system.
- (c) Each new personal wireless facility will be subject to a 10 year review by the Ministry. The review will determine whether or not the originally approved tower height and accessory equipment are still necessary to provide adequate communication service.
- (d) The use shall not adversely affect the health, peace or safety of persons residing or working on the premises or in the surrounding area.
- (e) Wireless facilities shall avoid potential damage to adjacent properties from tower or antenna failure through engineering and careful siting of telecommunications tower structures. [See 9 1. & 4. For setback conditions]
- (f) In no case shall a tower be located in the front yard, back yard, or side yard in a residential district.

- (g) A land use permit for a personal wireless facility shall become null, void and non-renewable if the facility is not constructed and placed into service within one year of the date of the issuance of the permit.
- (h) The applicant must notify the Planning Authority of all structural changes in the application of a previously permitted personal wireless facility within 90 days of change.
- (i) All personal wireless facilities must comply with the current building regulations in the Town and Country Planning Act.
- (j) No on premise storage of material or equipment shall be allowed other than that used in the operation and maintenance of the personal wireless facility site.

(vi) Roof-Mounted Systems

- (a) Roof-mounted antennas shall be located as far away as technically feasible from the edge of the building. Antennas attached to the building should be painted otherwise treated to match the exterior of the building.
- (b) Equipment enclosures and antennas shall not extend more than 5m from the top of the building.

(vi) Building Codes and Safety Standards

- (a) To ensure structural integrity of towers, the owner shall ensure it is maintained in compliance with of the standards contained in applicable building regulations in the Act that governs physical development in the country.
- (b) If upon inspection, the Planning Authority concludes that a tower fails to comply with such codes and standards and constitutes a danger to persons or property, then upon notice being provided to the owner of the tower, the owner shall have 30 days to bring such tower into compliance. If the owner fails to bring such tower into compliance within 30 days, the Planning Authority may remove such tower at the owner's expense.

(vii) Specific Permitted Uses

- (a) Erecting a tower or antenna, including the placement of additional buildings or other supporting equipment used in connection with said tower or antenna, at a minimum distance equal to the height of the tower.
- (b) Installing antenna on an existing structure other than a tower (such as a building sign, light pole, water tower, or other free standing non-residential structure) that is 15 meters in height or greater, so long as said additional antenna adds no more than 5 meters to the height of the said existing structure.
- (c) Installing an antenna on an existing tower of any height, so long as the additional of said antenna adds no more than 5m to the height of the said existing tower.
- (d) Location of any tower must be certified by a licensed professional engineer that it can structurally accommodate the number of shared users proposed by the applicant. Furthermore, the Ministry must conclude that the tower is in conformity with the goals set forth in this policy and the tower is to be setback from any existing residential setting at a distance equal to the height of the tower and with the exception of broadcasting towers, meet the following height and usage criteria:
 - (i) For a single user, up to 45 meters in height
 - (ii) For two users, up to 55 meters in height
 - (iii) For three or more users, up to 65 meters in height

(viii) Information

Each applicant for erecting a tower must submit a scaled site plan and a scaled elevation view and other supporting drawings, calculations and other documentation, signed and sealed by a licensed professional engineer, showing location and dimensions of all improvements, including information concerning topography, radio frequency, service coverage, capacity, structural integrity of the tower structure, number and type of antenna, tower height requirements, setbacks (verification if adequate to contain debris in case of a structural failure), drives, parking, fencing, landscaping, adjacent uses, and other information deem by the Planning Authority to be necessary to assess compliance with this policy.

(xi) Factors Considered in Approval Process

- (a) Height of the proposed tower.
- (b) Proximity of the tower to residential settings.
- (c) Nature of uses on adjacent and nearby properties.
- (d) Surrounding topography.
- (e) Surrounding tree coverage and foliage.
- (f) Design of tower, with particular reference to design characteristics that have the effect of reducing or eliminating visual obtrusiveness.
- (g) Availability of suitable existing towers and other structures.
- (h) Engineering and technical requirements to provide a reliable service.
- (i) Economic constraints on the construction and operation of the site and the overall system.

(ix) Co-location/shared Opportunities

No tower shall be permitted unless the applicant demonstrates to the reasonable satisfaction of the **Ministry & Authority** that no existing tower or structure can accommodate the applicant's proposed antenna. The following are evidence that may be acceptable to demonstrate that no existing tower or structure can accommodate the applicant's proposed antenna.

- (a) No existing towers or structures are located within the geographical area required to meet the applicant's engineering requirements.
- (b) Existing towers or structures are not of sufficient height to meet applicant's engineering requirements.
- (c) Existing towers or structures do not have sufficient structural strength to support applicant's proposed antenna and related equipment.
- (d) The applicant's proposed antenna would cause electromagnetic interference with the antenna on the existing towers or structures, or the antenna on the existing towers or structures would cause interference with the applicant's proposed antenna.

(x) Tower Separation

Towers shall not be located within 1km from any existing tower that adheres to this policy, unless one of the following:

- (a) Technologically required.
- (b) Visually preferable.

- (c) One of the towers in question is located at the telecommunications service provider's main office premises.
- (d) The towers are located at a tower-farm.

(xi) Security Fencing

Towers shall be enclosed by decay-resistant security fencing not less than 2m in height and shall be equipped with an appropriate anti-climbing device and warning signs.

(xii) Removal of Abandoned Antennas and Towers

Any tower that is not operated for a continuous period of 12 months shall be considered abandoned, and the owner shall remove the same within 90 days or receipt of notice from the Planning Authority, notifying the owner of such abandonment. If such antenna or tower is not removed within the said 90 days, the Planning Authority may, remove such antenna or tower at the owner's expense. If there are two or more users of a single tower, then this provision shall not become effective until all users cease using the tower.

Contact Information

Planning Authority Secretariat

Independence House – P O Box 199 - Victoria – Mahe – SEYCHELLES

Telefax: 4610148 Tel: 4674530 Email: *planning authority@mluh.gov.sc*

Related Information

Town and Country Planning Act CAP 237

DICT legislations

Environment legislations

Other Documents:

[Related External Document Link](#)