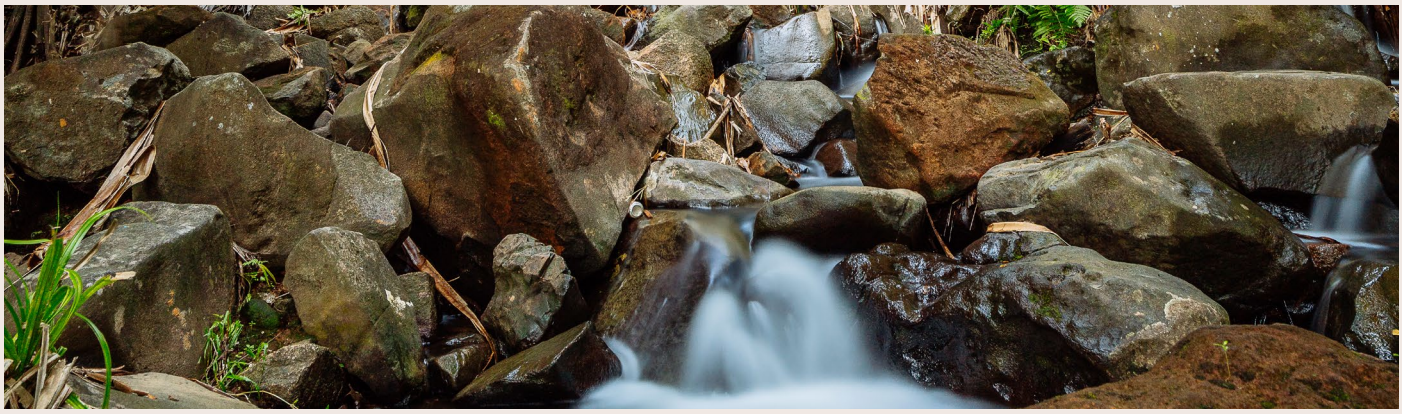
Prepared by Gaea Seychelles with input from the Ministry of Environment, Climate, Energy and Natural Resources & the Landscape and Waste Management Agency

POLICY BRIEF 3

River management for Landscape and Maintenance Contractors

Operational excellence for climate-resilient waterways



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Executive Summary

River systems in Seychelles are increasingly impacted by channel modification, improper vegetation clearing, sediment runoff and pollution, and poor maintenance practices. These impacts undermine freshwater biodiversity, increase erosion, and reduce natural flood resilience. This policy brief provides strategic and operational guidance for landscape and maintenance contractors in the Seychelles. This brief ensures that maintenance works safeguard river ecosystems while simultaneously maintaining vital flood protection.

Policy context

Seychelles' rivers are currently under stress from:

- Channel modifications.
- Clear-cutting of riparian vegetation.
- Construction runoff (silt and cement wash).
- Improper waste disposal and pollution.

Key policy objectives

- Standardise river maintenance across all private and public contractors.
- Promote nature-based solutions.
- Strengthen flood and climate change resilience through healthy river morphology.

Core principles for contractors

1. ECOSYSTEM-BASED MANAGEMENT
   - Preserve native flora: Protect plants that stabilise bank and maintain root networks.
   - Natural flow: Maintain natural river curves.
2. POLLUTION PREVENTION
   - Zero discharge: Prevent oils from maintenance equipment from entering the water
   - Silt control: Use sediment traps and silt fences during all bank-side works.
   - Waste management: Remove all rubbish and debris from the site periodically.

Adopt responsible practices



'Investing in malpractices of river maintenance. Current maintenance practices are detrimental to freshwater ecosystems. This is an urgent call to address the degradation'

The Problem

Maintenance contractors with no ecological knowledge of the importance of river habitats often clear vital micro-habitats within rivers and along riverbanks.

The Impact

These malpractices undermine freshwater biodiversity, increase erosion and reduce ecosystem resilience.

The Solution

Provide training and Standard Operating Procedures for river maintenance to all contractors.

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Standardised operational guidelines

Do (Best Practice)	Do NOT (Prohibited)
Assess sites before starting work.	Dump soil or green waste in the river.
Obtain all permits from designated authorities.	Enter the channel with heavy machinery except in specific circumstances to alleviate flooding risk.
Use manual tools in sensitive zones.	Clear-cut the entire riverbank.
Mark a 5 m buffer zone (non-clearing zone) along riverbanks.	Redirect flow without written approval.
Undertake preventive works & emergency interventions, in accordance with appropriate authorisation.	Do not deviate from the standard approach without an appropriate authorisation process.

Monitoring and compliance

- Site inspections: Periodic, unannounced visits by Government Inspectors.
- Photo logs: Mandatory 'Before, During, and After' photo documentation for every project.
- Checklists: Use of a National river maintenance checklist for every site.
- Penalties: Fines and loss of contractor accreditation for non-compliance under the Environment Protection Act.

Recommended strategic actions

- National SOPs: Finalise the official Standard Operating Procedures for river maintenance.
- Certification: Launch a mandatory 'Environmental accreditation' for all drainage maintanenance contractors.
- Training: Provide hands-on training for site supervisors on ecosystem maintenance techniques.
- Dashboards: Strengthen the performance-tracking system to rate contractor compliance.



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About Gaea Seychelles
Gaea Seychelles is a research and citizen science-based organisation launched in 2018. Its mission is to empower and mobilise actions by local actors to undertake impactful environmental community-based projects which creates significant and sustained change for the betterment of people's lives and their environment.

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