



SEYCHELLES BROADCASTING CORPORATION

Press Release

Work on SBC House progressing well and set for completion in April 2021

The SBC has confirmed that work on the SBC House project is progressing well, despite some setbacks, with April 2021 set as the revised anticipated completion date.

Construction of the five-storey building at Union Vale started in April 2019, almost four months after Vice President Vincent Meriton, Chinese Ambassador to Seychelles, Mrs Guo Wei and the Chairman of the SBC Board of Directors, Gérard Lafortune participated in the ground-breaking ceremony.

The project was originally expected to be completed by the end of this year but encountered a 6-week delay following adverse weather and ground conditions towards the end of 2019. The project was further delayed in the first quarter of this year by the COVID-19 pandemic as the restrictions imposed did not allow new differently skilled workers to enter the country.

Presently, the project is at main structure stage. Major concrete works have been completed and internal wall block works are ongoing.

The next phase of the build will be the roof structure which is expected to start by the end of August.

Delays due to COVID-19 restrictions



Major concrete works have been completed

The SBC Project Manager, Mr Dereck Rioux, has explained that the main reason for the delay and the revision in the completion timeline is due to a lack of skilled workers. He explained that with the flight restrictions and the new regulations concerning the issuance of GOP, the skilled workers were unable to travel to Seychelles to be part of the team. Consequently, the contractor had to upskill the Nepali labourers in masonry works which took time. However, the workmanship quality is not up to par to that of skilled masons.

Now, with the re-opening of our borders to commercial passenger flights, there are ongoing negotiations by the Department of Foreign Affairs with the Ministry of Employment to issue GOP to these workers on the basis that the project is of national importance. This is expected to reduce the accumulated delay and bring the project back on track.



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Other pertinent issues and challenges:

Car parking facility - SBC House should have its own carpark as per condition set by the Planning Authority upon approval of this project. A proposal has been put to the Government to build the car park opposite the construction site where the excavated soil coming from the site had been dumped. To that effect, the Department of Environment has recommended that rock armouring is erected to contain the soil. To note that this endeavour has been put on hold although it has received the approval of the Planning Authority, principally for funding reasons.

Partitioning of the Open Offices - The SBC House building was designed with open plan office space. Following a review of the initial layout, SBC contracted a draughtsman to redesign the office space to cater for the existing staffing requirements and for better functionality within the offices. The proposal for partitioning to be implemented during the construction phase was not entertained by the Chinese side. The partitioning of the offices can now only be done after the formal handing over of the completed building to the Seychelles by the Chinese government.

Road diversion - It came to light following the casting of the ground floor slab, that the part of the floor slab facing the North is lower than the existing pavement. A proposal has also been put forward to divert the main road a bit further to the right to mitigate this issue of levels and proximity to the building. The diversion will also leave space for a green area in front of the building giving it a more appealing look.

Discussion is ongoing with SLTA on how to incorporate the above proposal within their development plan for that area.

Background information



The SBC House concept

The SBC House is being financed by a grant from the Chinese Government and the contractor is Hunan 6 Engineering Com. Limited. The estimated cost for the project is SCR240 million, inclusive of furniture and equipment.

Once completed, the building will occupy an area of 5,600 square metres and will comprise of different buildings annexed together to accommodate both TV and radio services.

The implementation agreement for the project was signed in mid-August 2017 by the Chief Executive Officer, Mr Bérard Duprès and Ms. Ai Pinang, Deputy Director General from the Chinese Ministry of Commerce.