

# Financial Assistance for Job Retention (FA4JR)

## Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. What is the aim of the scheme?

President Danny Faure announced on March 20th, 2020 that the Seychelles Government would budget funds to help retain jobs in private sector businesses that are suffering significant negative impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic. The Financial Assistance for Job Retention (FA4JR) Committee was thus set up to help businesses pay the salaries of their employees for the months of April, May and June 2020.

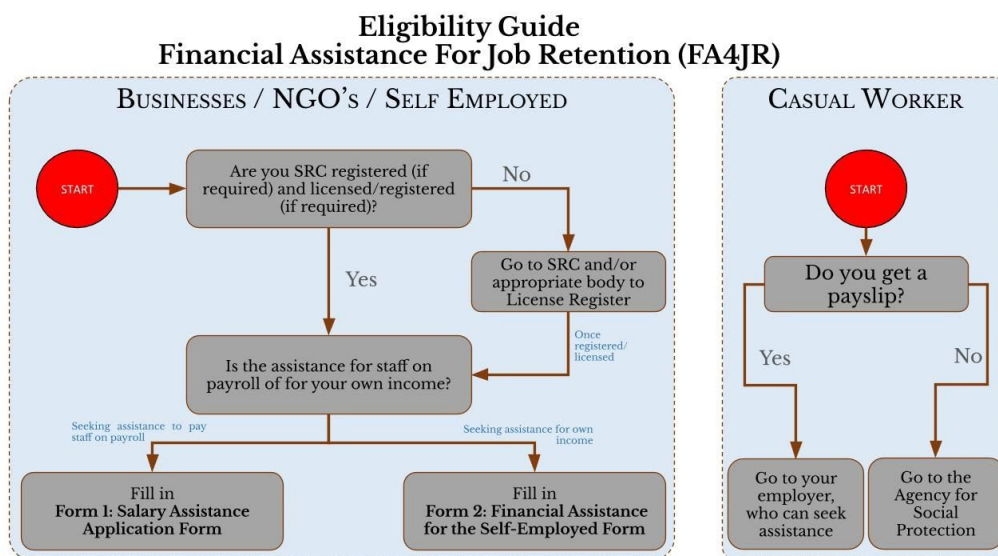
### 2. Who is eligible to receive benefits under this scheme?

The scheme is primarily intended to assist private businesses and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) which already submit a monthly payroll to the Seychelles Revenue Commission (SRC), regardless of how many employees they have.

However, it is important to note that applicants must be able to meet all of the following criteria:

- Be able to explain how COVID-19 has caused significant disruption to its business activity
- Prove a reduction in turnover of more than 25%
- Be temporarily unable to pay normal salaries
- Agree that no staff are to be made redundant

For a comprehensive guide of who qualifies and which type of assistance they should be applying for, please follow the flowchart below:



### 3. If I am self-employed or run a licensed business, do I qualify for Salary Assistance?

Self-employed sole traders registered with the SRC for tax and those whose businesses are officially licensed under a regulatory framework (e.g. SLA, IECD or any other formal associations) will be able to apply for support under the FA4JR scheme.

### 4. What provision has been made for casual workers?

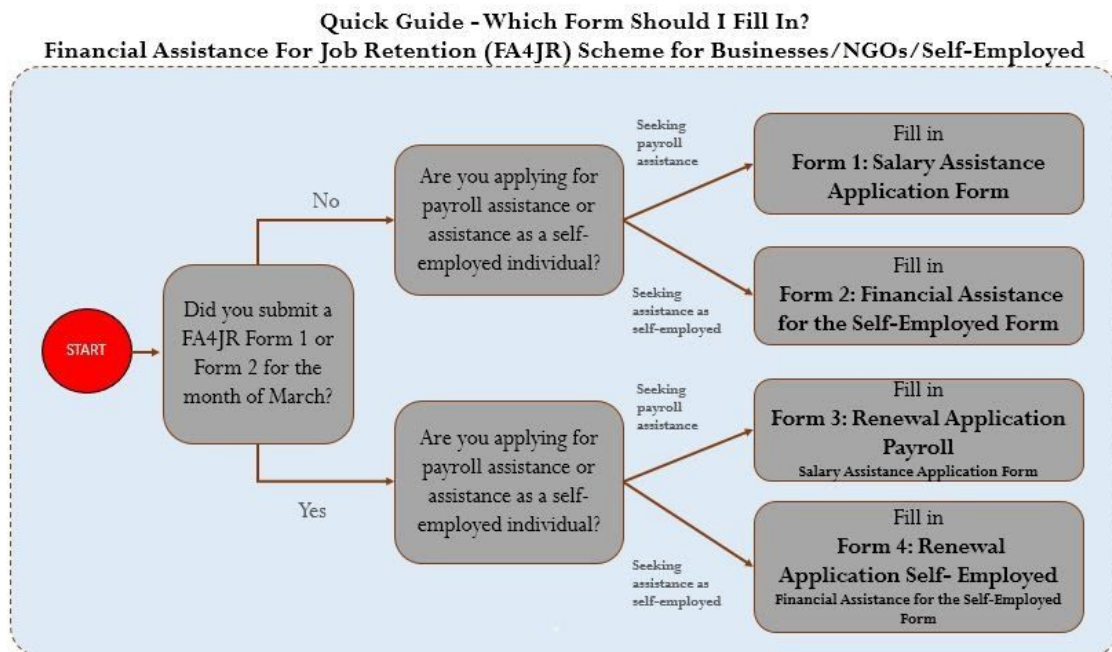
This scheme covers casual workers who are on a business payroll and those individuals who have registered as business, sole trader or partnership or are licensed in any other form (see question 3 above).

### 5. Who should apply for the assistance?

Business owners or employers can apply for assistance, NOT employees. If you are neither a business owner, an employer, or an employee, see question 4 above to see whether you are eligible to apply.

### 6. How does the application process work?

#### Step 1: Choose the correct application form:



[Click here to download the flowchart in PDF form](#)

#### Step 2: Download/collect your form.

All application forms are available for download on the Ministry of Finance, Trade, Investment and Economic Planning (MoFTIEP) website under the "[Financial Schemes](#)" section (see top of page)

From Tuesday 31st March 2020, hard-copy forms will also be made available for collection from any of the following locations during normal office hours (Monday to Friday, 8am to 4pm):

- Ministry of Finance, Trade, Investment and Economic Planning, Liberty House, Victoria (ground floor at Security)
- Ministry of Employment, Immigration and Civil Status, Independence House, Victoria
- Seychelles Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) offices at Providence Industrial Estate
- All District Administration (DA) offices in all districts around Mahe, Praslin and La Digue

### **Step 2: Call the Hotline for assistance**

If businesses require any assistance filling in the form, they are advised to call the FA4JR Hotline on **2 82 82 62** (Monday to Friday from 8am to 4pm). Due to the most recent social distancing guidelines provided by the public health authorities in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic, **face-to-face interaction with the public will be limited.**

### **Step 3: Submit your application**

Via email: Submit your signed and scanned application form with supporting electronic documents to [fa4jr@finance.gov.sc](mailto:fa4jr@finance.gov.sc)

Via collection box: submit your hard copy documents in a SEALED envelope addressed to the Financial Assistance for Job Retention Committee, Liberty House, Victoria into any designated FA4JR collection box which can be found in the following locations:

- Ministry of Finance, Trade, Investment and Economic Planning, Liberty House, Victoria (ground floor at Security)
- All District Administration (DA) offices in all the districts around Mahe, Praslin and La Digue

At the point of completing/submitting the application form, our team members will not be able to comment on eligibility or the extent of assistance that may be provided. The level of assistance is determined once the Committee has reviewed the full application form (with all the required documentation provided).

### **Step 4: Your application is processed**

The administration team will log all new applications received and begin the process and verification stage. You will be notified via email once the FA4JR team receives your application. If you have not received an email within 5 working days, please call the FA4JR Hotline on 2 82 82 62. Should there be any supporting documents missing or additional information required, the applicant will be contacted directly via email or telephone.

### **Step 5: A decision is made**

Your form and documentation will be passed on to the FA4JR Committee, which will review your application in conjunction with the documents you have provided. Based on the established criteria, a decision will be made. You will be informed of the decision via email, advising you of the next steps.

### **7. What kind of documentation will I need to provide with my application?**

This depends on which type of assistance is being applied for: Form 1 (payroll assistance for employees) or Form 2 (financial assistance for the self-employed). Please see Question 2 for more details.

A full list of the supporting documents is available at the bottom of each application form.

### **8. Do I have to apply every month for the assistance?**

If you have already successfully applied for assistance and wish to renew your application for the next month, you will need to submit a renewal form. In addition to the renewal forms, you will also need to provide the following documents with your renewal application:

#### **Form 3 (for applicants requesting the renewal of payroll assistance):**

- Current month payroll (the month for which you are applying)
- Previous month bank statements for all bank accounts

#### **Form 4 (for self-employed individuals requesting renewal of income assistance):**

- Previous month bank statements for all bank accounts

### **9. Is there a minimum or maximum salary covered by the FA4JR scheme?**

Once approved by the Committee, assistance can cover employees earning anything from the minimum wage up to a maximum limit of SR 30,000 per month.

### **10. What if the assistance does not cover my whole payroll?**

A credit line will also be made available through the commercial banks from the Central Bank of Seychelles (CBS) for additional loans to assist businesses with liquidity difficulties during this period. Businesses will need to contact their banks directly to discuss the appropriate financial remedy.

### **11. What is the deadline for applications?**

Businesses have until the last working day of each month to submit their final application and all supporting documents. Applicants should bear in mind that payments will not be made immediately after your submission. See question 12 below for the expected time lag between submission and payment.

## **12. How long will it take to decide whether the application is approved or not?**

You will be notified by email the day your application has been received by the administration team. From that day onwards, provided all supporting documents have been received, the following times are indicated for a final decision to be reached:

Form 1 (employee payroll assistance): 10 working days

Form 2 (financial assistance for the self-employed): 15 working days

## **13. If I am not happy with the decision taken, can I appeal?**

If you are unsatisfied with the decision taken, a letter of appeal should be written and submitted via email to [fa4jr.appeals@finance.gov.sc](mailto:fa4jr.appeals@finance.gov.sc) within 5 working days of receiving the decision letter. Appeals will be considered by a committee comprising individuals who are not on the FA4JR Committee

## **14. What will happen if my business is affected financially for more than 3 months and I still need assistance to pay my staff?**

This measure has been put in place in order to alleviate the immediate impact of the COVID-19 global pandemic on businesses in Seychelles. With the uncertainty relating to the progress of this pandemic (domestically and internationally), these measures are under constant review and assessment.

## **15. Whose account will the funds be deposited into?**

The funds will be disbursed directly into the employer's (or self-employed) business account.

## **16. Who will know that my company received assistance?**

The full list of businesses and organisations that received assistance will be published in the public domain after the assistance period is over.

## **17. What employee payroll contributions and taxes will employers still be liable for while receiving this assistance?**

Employers are expected to pay the salaries of the employees in line with the submitted payroll. Contributions such as Personal Income Tax and Pension Fund is expected to be paid in the same manner and to the same level as employers did before the FA4JR assistance was being granted. Kindly visit (<https://pensionfund.sc/>) for more information on mandatory employer contributions to the Seychelles Pension Fund.

## **18. What types of employee allowances will be covered under this salary payment scheme?**

Only fixed allowances will be paid by the government assistance. Periodic allowances and commissions that vary month-on-month (e.g. service charge) will not be covered.

**19. If an individual has a business and has been adversely affected by the COVID 19 and getting paid through another income, will the financial assistance be applicable to him/her?**

Self-employed applicants applying for business assistance under Form 2 will not be eligible if they are also in full-time or regular employment (i.e. on another company's payroll). The FA4JR scheme will assist each individual based on a single salary from one business entity. Other types of income will be reviewed and assessed on a case-by-case basis.

**20. Do I have to visit the commercial banks to request bank statements?**

The bank statement has been identified as an important supporting document to substantiate the validity of applications. Applicants are encouraged to opt to receive electronic statements through their banks' online banking platforms. Nevertheless, applicants may direct their request for bank statements as follows:

Bank	Email	Tel
Nouvobanq	Chantal@nouvobanq.sc	4293000
MCB (mention COVID-19)	contact@mcbseychelles.com	4284550
Seychelles Credit Union	Annarita@scu.sc	4290109
Al Salam bank	enquiries@alsalamseychelles.com	4385600
Bank of Ceylon	itmseychelles@boc.lk	4611890
SBM	SBMSeychelles@sbmgroup.mu	4303356/ 4303351
Seychelles Commercial Bank Victoria	queries.victoria.branch@scb.sc	4294062
Seychelles Commercial Bank AAP	queries.anseauxpins.branch@scb.sc	4294111
Seychelles Commercial Bank Praslin	queries.praslin.branch@scb.sc	4294130
Seychelles Commercial Bank La Digue	queries.ladigue.branch@scb.sc	4294142
Seychelles Commercial Bank Providence	queries.providence.branch@scb.sc	4294118 / 4294040

Seychelles Commercial Bank Corporate	queries.corporate.branch@scb.sc	4294040
Bank of Baroda	operations@@bankofbaroda.com seyche@bankofbaroda	4618011/ 4618002
ABSA Seychelles	customerservices.sc@absa.africa	4383939

Clients should specify the period for which they require the bank statement. Once the document is ready for collection, the bank will contact the client either through email or phone. Upon collection at the bank, the client will be required to show proof of identity e.g. national identity card.

#### **21. If I still have questions, how do I get in touch?**

Call the FA4JR Hotline on **2 82 82 62** for advice or email your query to [fa4jr@finance.gov.sc](mailto:fa4jr@finance.gov.sc)

#### **22. What if I have one or more business partners?**

If your business partnership has been formally registered with the Registration Office, and you are seeking income assistance, then only one authorised partner should complete [Form 2](#) on behalf of the business. The authorised partner must then complete "[Annex C - Partnership Information](#)", providing the full details of all other partners in the partnership, including details of the income that each partner is seeking under the FA4JR assistance scheme.