



SEYCHELLES SUSTAINABLE TOURISM FOUNDATION 2021 ANNUAL REPORT

Our Vision

"Making Seychelles an international best practice example for sustainable tourism through an integrated collaborative approach between public, private sector, academia and NGOs."

Our Mission

The foundation acts as a clearing house that deals full-time with sustainable tourism, that connects, collects, shares, lobbies, implements and raises funds for this endeavor and is the main focal point for all sustainable tourism matters in the country.

Working in unprecedented times

Like many other NGOs in Seychelles and around the world, the economic and societal impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic has driven down momentum and brought many projects and activities to a halt. Despite the economic constraints and limitations in capacity, SSTF has tried to sustain a certain level of activeness through internships, consultancy work, attendance of workshops, and involvement in projects led by other organisations. The pandemic has reminded us on the importance of partnerships and collaborations in times of hardship.

Our Team

Chairperson: Daniella Payet Alis

Board Member: Daniella Larue

Vice-Chairperson: Diana Körner

Board Member: Mark Jeyhasingh

Treasurer: Lekha Nair

Consultant/Manager: Victoria Alis

Secretary: Ina Laporte

Interns: Harini Naidu & Tina Berles

Internships

To expose young people to various scope of sustainable tourism activities & opportunities, to help build capacity and encourage them to persue careers in this field, SSTF hosted 2 long-term internships.

Meet Ms. Harini Naidu (Seychelles)

Ms. Harini Naidu, a young graduate from the University of Seychelles, began her 6-month internship with SSTF in July 2020 as part of 'My First Job Scheme', a programme launched by the Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs during the COVID-19 economic recovery.

Ending in January 2021, Ms. Naidu gained experience in writing project proposals, delivering workshop presentations and conducting in-depth research on identifying and analyzing Seychelles' current status within the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) Destination Criteria. With the help of another intern back in 2020, this exercise aimed to identify priority areas to meet the national goal of Seychelles becoming a certified destination through a GSTC approved body. Ms. Naidu specifically analyzed Section A of the GSTC criteria and has produced a report on this body of work that will be used to conduct further research.



Meet Ms. Tina Berles (Germany)

Ms. Tina Berles, a German third-year Bachelor's student studying tourism and hospitality, joined SSTF and the Seychelles Hospitality Tourism Association (SHTA) in a joint internship programme from April to October 2021. This joint internship demonstrated the benefits of resource-sharing and collaborations between NGOs working on similar priority areas. Ms. Berles worked as a Project Officer on a number of project-based activities, namely on SSTF's 'Tourism Plastics Initiative' which involved compiling a database of local and international eco responsible suppliers offering environmentally friendly products & single-use plastic alternatives in order to help tourism establishments reduce waste and switch to more environmentally friendly products. This also included interviewing small and large tourism establishments to capture good practices and challenges in implementing sustainability practices.



Tina was also involved in an artisanal training initiative whereby she designed a survey targeted at tourism accommodations to assess the existing and potential demand for artisanal products in Seychelles. She was also involved in a cooking competition to promote local chefs and local food production.

Internship Key Project Outcomes

1. Eco-friendly suppliers and green alternatives database

Product Category	Product Name	Company Name	Product Description (i.e. materials, functioning)	Made in Seychelles?
Food & Beverage	Plates	Blue Ocean Traders	- Bagasse plates - Circular or rectangular shapes- Quantity ranges between 100 to 500 per carton	No
Food & Beverage	Palm Leaf	Blue Ocean Traders	- Rectangular or square shapes- Quantity 100 per carton	No
Food & Beverage	Bowls	Blue Ocean Traders	- Bagasse bowls- Quantity 500 per carton	No
Food & Beverage	Cutlery	Blue Ocean Traders	- Recycled compostable RCPLA forks, knives, spoons & tea spoons- Wood/No	No
Food & Beverage	Portion Pots & Lids	Blue Ocean Traders	- PLA material - Sizes range from 0.5 oz to 4 oz- Quantity ranges from 200 to 500	No
Food & Beverage	Fast Food Packaging	Blue Ocean Traders	- Food cartons ranging in sizes 700-1050ml - Window boxes 22 oz or 32 oz	No
Food & Beverage	Straws	Blue Ocean Traders	- Materials: PLA, paper- Variations: black cocktail, green stripes clear, diff.	No



In the lead up to the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) in 2021, SSTF became a signatory of the Global Tourism Plastics Initiative, a project under the One Planet Sustainable Tourism Programme aiming to articulate, support and scale-up action by tourism stakeholders and build a global alliance to fight plastic pollution. As a signatory and in effort to tackle plastic pollution within the Seychelles' tourism industry, SSTF aimed to compile a database of eco-friendly suppliers and plastic alternative goods & services to facilitate the process of identifying such suppliers for businesses in the hospitality sector.

This includes suppliers offering products that are non-toxic to the environment, compostable, biodegradable or that cancel out entirely the use of single-use plastic items (e.g. atmospheric water generators and tap filters). Some businesses have the will power to invest in 'green' products but identifying options on the market can be very time-consuming and costly. This database aims to centralise information and to be adaptable for both small and large tourism establishments.

2. GSTC Mapping Exercise

The Global Sustainable Tourism Council sets destination criteria to achieve a holistic tourism planning, monitoring and evaluation approach which takes into account the long-term sustainability of a destination. SSTF has been advocating for Seychelles to become a GSTC-certified destination and its vision is to make Seychelles an international best practice example for sustainable tourism.

With the economic impacts of COVID-19 emphasizing the importance of strategic planning in tourism and to build resilience, SSTF initiated an exercise to assess the current status quo of Seychelles' adherence to the GSTC destination criteria, on the one hand to facilitate the process towards destination certification, as described in the Seychelles Tourism Master Plan, and on the other hand to fulfill its role as a connecting platform to collect all relevant sustainable tourism data and support ongoing processes as much as possible.

The initial target, over the six-month internship period, was to achieve a criteria assessment of 19 principles, along with their indicators, under the themes 'sustainable management' and 'socio-economic sustainability'. However, due to the complexity of some of the criteria, limited capacity and inavailability of data, only 4 criteria under 'sustainable management' were assessed within this period.



SSTL Survey & Review by SSTF

What is the SSTL?

The Seychelles Sustainable Tourism Label (SSTL) is a sustainable tourism certification program for accommodations of all sizes, designed specifically for use in Seychelles. This voluntary program was launched by the Ministry of Tourism, together with the government of Seychelles' UNDP-GEF Programme Coordination Unit, in April 2011 and was designed to encourage hotels and other tourism establishments to merge the principles of sustainability into their daily operations. In 2017, the SSTL achieved 'GSTC-Recognized' status by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC), a worldwide-recognized leading organization which establishes and manages global sustainable standards with the aim of increasing sustainable tourism knowledge and practices among public and private stakeholders.

Obstacles & constraints

The Department of Tourism (DoT) has put extensive efforts in reaching out directly to tourism accommodations to encourage more establishments to apply for the SSTL certification. Despite these efforts, only 21 establishments in 2021 were successfully certified. Very few small tourism enterprises (i.e. 1 – 24 rooms) formed part of those SSTL-certified establishments. To investigate the why only very small establishments had become certified or even showed interest, SSTF conducted interviews with managers and owners of 17 non SSTL-certified small tourism accommodations (1-24 rooms) that the DoT had previously contacted in 2019 but did not get a response from.

Key Findings

The top three reasons for not having applied (before COVID) was:

- 1) They did not understand the purpose of the label
- 2) They found a lack of communication and clarity on the benefits of being certified as a small tourism establishment
- 3) They did not know the label existed

When asked what can be improved or what can help promote the label, many said to improve on

communication and visibility of the label, to make the benefits for small establishments clear and to make sure that there is a good follow-up with tourism businesses.

Proposed solutions & actions

Based on the findings, SSTF put forward the following actions to address some of the obstacles identified in the survey:

Action #1: A national campaign targeted at (small) tourism accommodations

The campaign would highlight the following benefits for establishments:

- Cost savings
- Market Appeal
- Exposure
- Recognition as a responsible establishment

Action #2: Promotion of the SSTL

To gain visibility and build a powerful marketing tool, the label needs to be collectively promoted on national and international platforms.

Action #3: Introducing "star rankings"

To further encourage establishments to improve on their SSTL scores, a "star ranking" system (e.g. bronze, silver, gold) could be put in place to reflect the establishment's efforts in sustainability best practices.

Action #4: Introducing a monitoring platform for SSTL-certified tourism businesses

Centralized and digitized monitoring and data collection from SSTL-certified hotels could allow more regular and efficient assessments of the establishment's efforts.



Supporting Artisanal Training Programme (AFS Partnership)

In October 2021, SSTF joined forces with L'Alliance Française des Seychelles (AFS) to support its artisanal training programme funded by MCB. The 2-week programme, facilitated and led by the global French designer, Nathalie KMIR, united an intergenerational group of artisans to guide them in individualising and exploring creative avenues to help diversify their crafts.

Having worked with different local artisanal groups and organisations in the past, SSTF assisted in sharing contacts and bringing actors around the table to collaborate on this great opportunity. The NGO additionally conducted research prior to the 2-week training programme to assess the existing and potential demand of different artisanal products within the hospitality sector to provide guidance on appropriate product diversification. Artisans, for the most part, appear to target their crafts at tourists and not necessarily at other tourism stakeholders.

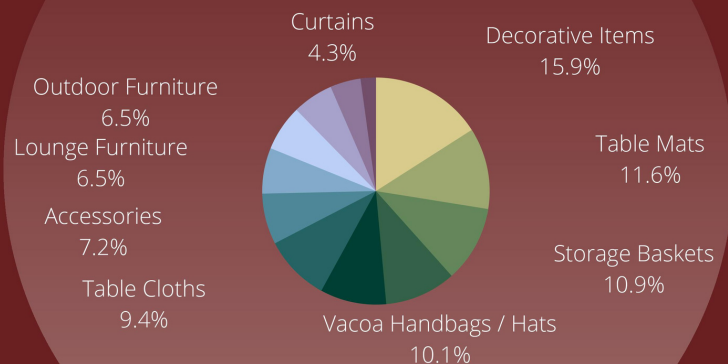
The majority of the respondents (70%) were self-caterings, followed by large hotels (16%), and over 90% of accommodations said they had already integrated artisanal crafts within their establishments.

Information on existing utilization and inclusion of artisanal products in tourism establishments, their existing choice of suppliers, their level of interest in different product categories and what they think could facilitate and drive more interest in artisanal purchases were all recorded in infographics.

The results of this small study were shared with artisans that signed up to the 2-week programme, as well as artisans that did not participate. Looking at the feedback from tourism establishments, they too shared their experiences and views on working with the hospitality sector. Feeling undervalued at times and with strong concerns of having their crafts stolen and replicated by others, artisans gave an insight as to why there is a tendency to work in isolation within this sector.



Potential Interest in Handicrafts



*Other : Shampoo & Conditioner Bars, Maintenance of 'Cannage and Rotin'

The establishments indicate their level of interest on a scale from 1 to 10, 1 being very low and 10 being sincere, as follows :

- Decorative items were on average rated with 8, followed by Jewelry & Accessories (6.86) and Cosmetic Products (6.57).
- In comparison, the interest in purchasing curtains is rated lowest with an average score of 3.57.

Estimated Quantities



The establishments would be interested in purchasing estimated quantities ranging from 1 to 25 pieces.



The real demand will strongly depend on the specific offers, the proposed quality, the level of personalization / adaptation to the individual premises as well as the prices.



Lower prices could encourage a higher demand. Some establishments view the current prices of certain products as too expensive (for example bathroom amenities).

Process of Ordering Crafts



All handicrafts should be presented at an organized artisan fair and additionally in a (virtual) catalog to display details and the crafts' availability. Furthermore, direct contact to the artisans is desirable for the majority of the surveyed establishments.



Kiltir Dan Marmit

The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have reminded us of the importance of sourcing food, amongst other goods, locally. Growing and buying locally brings a number of benefits; it supports the local economy, reduces “food miles”, is more likely to be more “preservative free” and gives back pride to the local agricultural sector. The local cuisine also forms a vital part of Seychelles’ cultural heritage. UNESCO recognizes every aspect of food, from the specific way of preparing a certain dish, to festivals and rituals related to food and its preparation. The meaning of food can be described as an exploration of culture through nutrition.



As an NGO that aims to advocate and promote Seychelles’ cultural heritage, SSTF decided to partner with the local media company, Marketing Guru, to put together a promotional cooking show called ‘Kiltir Dan Marmit’ to **1) Pay homage to Seychelles' traditional local dishes through innovation and creativity 2) Promote and reward local culinary talent 3) Promote the environmental and health benefits of buying locally sourced ingredients and 4) Encourage winners of the competition to become Sustainable Creole Food ambassadors.** The pilot show aims to be aired by the end of 2022 on a local TV station.

This initiative was made possible thanks to the collective support of local partners:

- Seychelles Tourism Academy (STA)
- Department of Culture
- Seychelles Chef's Association
- Marketing Guru

And our generous sponsors:

- MCB Seychelles
- Wow Delivery
- Coco Farm
- Val Riche
- Les Lauriers
- Constance Lemuria
- K-radio



Green Footprint Seychelles: Salazie

Reforestation Pilot Project

Visitors to Seychelles, primarily from Western Europe, are known to be particularly environmentally conscious and, globally, travelers are increasingly moving towards sustainable tourism options. As protecting the natural environment becomes a determining factor for Seychelles' tourism-led economy, and as climate change impacts become increasingly visible, it is vital to both preserve the natural ecosystems and implement climate change mitigation strategies which encourage a clean and sustainable return to tourism in Seychelles.

Knowing the economic imperative of a green tourism recovery, the British High Commission (BHC) Victoria, in partnership with the Seychelles Parks and Gardens Authority (SPGA), launched the BHC-funded 'Green Footprint Seychelles' initiative. SSTF joined this pilot project as a consultant to assist in developing a scientific-based and marketable tree-planting scheme to address the environmental impacts and greenhouse gas emissions of long-haul travel and tourism, one of the causes of global warming.

Salazie, located in the Morne Seychellois national park, was selected as a trial site to test carbon sink measurements and monitoring, and assess the feasibility of maintaining restored forest sites on the long-term. The restoration, protection and sustainable management of forests plays a critical role in naturally managing carbon emissions.

Forty eight per cent of terrestrial land territory and over eighty-eight percent of forestry is protected, but the archipelago still faces threats from invasive alien species (IAS) and human development. A total of 900 hardwood endemic and native species of trees, primarily *Mimusops sechellarum* (Bwa-d-tab) and *Heritiera littoralis* (Bwa-d-tab), were restored on 3,500m² of forest area originally invaded by IAS.

The pilot is a balancing act between CO₂ capture and forest habitat preservation, encouraging participants to help create effective carbon sinks and preserve biodiversity.



Trainings

SSTF provided sustainability trainings under SHTA's 4-day training programme, covering topics such as Digital Marketing, Grooming & Personal Hygiene, Sustainability and Conflict Resolution.

SSTF gave a training which focused on market trends and traveler expectations, the procedures and benefits of being certified by internationally-recognized sustainable tourism labels (with a focus on the SSTLI), and how to improve waste management within a small tourism establishment.

The NGO took the opportunity to introduce Ms. Anula Galewska, Founder of 'Sustainable Tourism Made Easy', who had recently visited Seychelles. Ms. Galewska kindly prepared a presentation on her holiday experience in Seychelles and the economic imperative of growing sustainable travel trends.

Other sustainability trainings were given to tourism establishments requesting to have staff sensitisation sessions on sustainable mindsets and implementing good practices.



Collect Connect Seychelles

In 2021, SSTF took part in an innovation program called "The Future of Plastic Waste", facilitated by the company SoScience and local facilitators, aiming to implement practical solutions for recycling, transforming, and reducing plastic waste in Seychelles by linking and supporting innovative and multi-stakeholder initiatives. This initiative also forms part of the DiDEM project, coordinated by the French National Research Institute for Sustainable Development (IRD), which aims to facilitate the dialogue between science and decision-makers for integrated management of coastal and marine environments in the Western Indian Ocean.

After a 2-day workshop, SSTF joined a team of local and international stakeholders to focus on recyclable (plastic) waste collection. Although Seychelles is small, there is no efficient system that connects consumers to recycling/upcycling businesses, big or small, nor is there a collection system for segregated waste. As a first phase, the project aims to investigate existing types of waste production, recycling interest and existing waste management within the tourism industry, as well as economic opportunities & incentives for segregation & collection of recyclable waste in Seychelles. The second phase would then involve developing and trialing a digital tool that would centralize the demands from recycling businesses or organisations and aid the identification and collection of supplies for any type of recyclable waste.



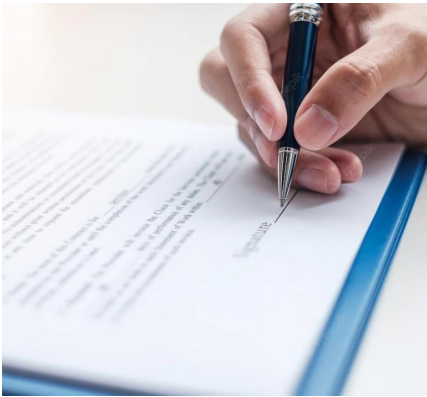
SoScience
DRIVING RESPONSIBLE INNOVATION

DiDEM
Dialogue Science-Decision Makers for Integrated
Management of Coastal and Marine Environment

'Global Tourism Plastics Initiative' Signatory



In 2021, SSTF became a signatory, amongst 100 other organizations, of the Global Tourism Plastics Initiative. These organisations shared their ambitious commitments with regards to the elimination of unnecessary single-use plastics, transition to reuse models and use of reusable, recyclable, or compostable plastic packaging and items. This initiative unites the tourism sector behind a common vision to address the root causes of plastic pollution. It enables businesses, governments and other tourism stakeholders to lead by example in the shift towards a circular economy of plastics.



SSTF aims to get other local organisations and businesses to become signatories and help contribute to this vision. We hope that Seychelles can lead by example as a Small Island Developing State and pledge and implement an action plan that tackles the plastic crisis.

Upcoming: Cultural heritage & marine conservation, 'Pye Koray'

The Marine Conservation Society Seychelles (MCSS) approached SSTF to get involved in rethinking coral restoration methods in Seychelles using creole traditional knowledge of weaving bamboo and pandanus, with the aim to create an innovative coral garden in the Ste Anne Marine National Park. Coral restoration aims to assist the recovery of reef structures and services, which have seen a mortality rate of up to 90% due to coral bleaching events in the inner granitic islands over the last two decades.

The coral gardening method involves the use of plastic (PVC pipe; cable ties; rope; etc.), which, given the global ocean plastic crisis, should ideally be replaced with locally harvested sustainable materials such as bamboo. The project proposes an innovative coral restoration project used as a mechanism to promote stewardship, traditional local knowledge and deliver conservation. education. The project aims to start in 2022.



Thank you to our partners



Join us

Join us on our journey towards a more sustainable tourism in Seychelles. If you wish to volunteer, or support us in any other way, please contact us at office.sstf@gmail.com or +248 2802884

You can also keep updated by:
Visiting our site <http://seychellessustainable.org>

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