



Best Practices Workshop
Port Elizabeth, South Africa
12-14 March 2025

Seychelles' Best Practices in Sustainable Tourism Development

An aerial photograph of a lush tropical landscape. A waterfall flows over dark, layered rock formations into a dark pool of water. The surrounding area is densely packed with various types of green plants, including palm trees and broad-leafed tropical foliage. The word "SEYCHELLES" is superimposed in large, white, sans-serif capital letters across the center of the image.

SEYCHELLES

Introduction

Seychelles is known to be a champion in environmental conservation with proactive environmental policies and conservation strategies, setting a benchmark for sustainable development. Over 40% of its land area designated as nature reserves or national parks, and 30 % of Seychelles' waters designated as marine protected areas.

Key among these is the Aldabra Atoll, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, which represents one of the world's largest coral atolls and is a sanctuary for thousands of giant Aldabra tortoises. Equally significant is the Seychelles Marine Spatial Plan, an innovative approach to marine conservation that balances ecological integrity with economic activity, ensuring the sustainability of the archipelago's marine resources.



Seychelles

- The Seychelles Archipelago composes of 115 islands with a population of 121354 (Approx.)
- Number of Tourist Arrivals for 2024: 352,762
- GDP: \$16.7 Billion (2023)
- Tourism earnings 2024: 986.18 million USD



Seychelles Sustainable Tourism Policy Framework



Vision: Transform tourism to be more resilient, prosperous, and inclusive for the communities of Seychelles.



Objective: Strengthen the capacity of public and private stakeholders in managing tourism's impact on the environment and communities.



Goal: Ensure tourism development is aligned with sustainability, focusing on both economic growth and ecological preservation.



Sustainable Seychelles Program

Sustainable Seychelles Program:

- A voluntary program recognising sustainable practices in tourism accommodations, restaurants, and tour operators.
- **Objective:** Encourage more efficient and sustainable ways of doing business, offering certification and recognition for sustainable tourism businesses.
- Launched in **2012 for tourism accommodation**, it promotes sustainability in Seychelles' tourism sector.
- Recognition program launched in October 2023, acknowledges businesses implementing sustainable practices.
- Launched of new standards for **Restaurants and tour operators in July 2024**.



SUSTAINABLE SEYCHELLES
Safeguarding Seychelles For Tomorrow

Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) Recognition

Achieved **GSTC-recognised status in April 2017** for accommodation criteria, aligning the Sustainable Seychelles Criteria with international sustainability standards.



Recognition VS Certification

Sustainable Seychelles Recognition

- Launched in October 2023, acknowledges businesses implementing sustainable practices.
- An entry-level recognition serving as a steppingstone for businesses starting their journey towards sustainability.
- Complements the Sustainable Seychelles Certification by recognising efforts at different stages of sustainability commitment.
- **53 accommodation** establishments have been recognised for sustainability efforts.

Sustainable Seychelles Certification

- Sustainable Seychelles Certification is designed for businesses that demonstrate a higher level of commitment and implementation of sustainable practices.
- Assessment conducted by third-party assessors.
- Certification endorse by an awards panel.
- **25 establishments** currently **certified** under Sustainable Seychelles, representing **27% of certified rooms**.

Recognition			Sustainable Seychelles Certified
Level 1 Blue Recognition	Level 2 Bronze Recognition	Level 3 Silver Recognition	
			

Core Pillars



Sustainable
Seychelles' Three
Core Pillars

Monitoring & Certification:
Recognising and certifying
accommodations and tourism
services dedicated to
sustainability.

Education & Training: Focusing
on developing training program
for individuals, tourism
professionals, and students

Sensitisation &
Awareness:
Promoting
sustainable
tourism practices
through
awareness
campaigns and
educational
initiatives.



Criteria

The criteria consist of 8 key themes:

Management:
Implementation of sustainable business strategies.

Waste: Reduction, reuse, and recycling practices.

Water: Efficient use and conservation measures.

Energy: Adoption of renewable energy and reduction of consumption.

Staff: Employee training and engagement in sustainability.

Conservation:
Protection of Seychelles' unique ecosystems.

Community Engagement:
Supporting local businesses, employment, and culture.

Guest Awareness:
Encouraging tourists to participate in sustainability efforts.

Cultural Preservation in Seychelles Tourism

- **Product Diversification:** A strategic move to diversify tourism offerings beyond the tradition “Sun, Sea and Sand” to enhance visitors experience, contribute to the local economy while ensuring the long-term sustainability and competitiveness of the tourism industry.
- **Creole Rendezvous Brand:**
 - Promote cultural heritage through experiences like local bazaars and cultural ateliers.
 - Provide opportunities for visitors to engage with local traditions and crafts.
- **Heritage Site Preservation:**
 - Seychelles Heritage Foundation: Protects and conserves cultural sites such as the "Domaine de Val des Près" which is a traditional Creole village.
 - Seychelles Island Foundation: Actively manages and promotes the Vallée de Mai- a UNESCO World Heritage Site known for its unique biodiversity, including the iconic Coco de Mer.
 - Aldabra Atoll- Another UNESCO World heritage site. One of the largest coral Atoll in the world. Home to the largest population of giant land tortoises in the world. The atoll is used as a research station powered by a hybrid photovoltaic-diesel energy system.
 - Charges an impact fee of \$250 per person per day for any visitors to cover environmental costs.



Carrying Capacity Study for Sustainable Tourism Growth



Objective: Assess the implications of ongoing tourism growth and its impact on the environment.



Goal: Develop Seychelles as a high-value, low-impact destination, preserving both the ecological and cultural integrity of the islands.



Method: Regular studies every 5 years to guide sustainable development, manage visitor numbers, and ensure responsible tourism practices.

Sustainable Development and Land Use

Physical Planning Regulations:

- Emphasise sustainable building practices, conservation of green spaces, and the integration of local culture in tourism development.

- More than 47% of the total land area of the Seychelles is under legal protection.

Land Use and Development Plans:

- Ensure that tourism facilities are aligned with sustainable land use practices.
- Protect local ecosystems while contributing to the country's social and economic goals.

Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA):

- For larger tourism projects or those near sensitive areas, an EIA is required to evaluate potential impacts on biodiversity, air and water quality, and land integrity. Developers must outline mitigation measures to minimise environmental disturbance during and after construction.



Marine Conservation Efforts

Marine Spatial Plans

Seychelles Marine Spatial Plan (SEYMSP):

- 30% of Seychelles' waters designated as marine protected areas.

Marine Protected Areas (MPAs):

- Sustainable tourism activities allowed in designated zones to ensure low-impact visitation. Tourism Activities include low impact activities like snorkeling, diving with certified operators, non-motorised water sports like kayaking, stand-up paddle boarding etc...



Coral Reef Restoration Initiatives

- **Coral Restoration Projects:**

- Involves tourism operators and guests in monitoring and rehabilitation of coral reefs.
- Collaborations with NGOs like Wise Ocean and the Marine Conservation Society Seychelles (MCSS) to protect and restore coral ecosystems.

- **Benefits of Coral Restoration:**

- Promotes biodiversity and strengthens local marine ecosystems.
- Engages visitors in environmental conservation, fostering awareness of Seychelles' marine life.



Conclusion

Integration of Policies:

- Seychelles combines environmental sustainability, cultural preservation, and responsible tourism practices in a unified approach to sustainable tourism development.

Collaborative Efforts:

- Involvement of both public and private stakeholders is key to maintaining Seychelles' unique environmental and cultural heritage.

Looking Ahead:

- Continue advancing sustainable tourism strategies to ensure Seychelles remains a top eco-friendly destination for generations to come.



**Thank
You!**