17th UNWTO Asia/Pacific Executive Training Programme

A shift in Customer Expectation and its Impact on Human Resource Development

A presentation by Diana Quatre and Mavreen Pouponneau

Tourism Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Tourism

Seychelles
The tourism industry in Seychelles is a vital sector of the country's economy and a key driver of its development, job creation, and economic prosperity.

Seychelles is an archipelago located in the Indian Ocean, off the eastern coast of Africa made up of 115 natural islands.

**Our estimated population**

107,660

**Tourist Arrival - 2023**

- Total Visitor arrivals: 319
- Target: 349

**Tourism Arrivals by year**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of visitors</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>333,315</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2022</td>
<td>332,068</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2023</td>
<td>269,413</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Total earnings by year**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Earnings (Billion USD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>0.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2022</td>
<td>0.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2023</td>
<td>0.7</td>
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</tbody>
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Visitor Expectation Challenges in Seychelles

**Sustainability**
- Visitors expect more sustainable and eco-friendly practices

**Improved Digital Experience**
- Visitors expect seamless digital experiences including online bookings, mobile check-ins, and access to digital guides and maps, coupled with the need for affordable, high-speed internet.

**The need for an authentic Creole experience**
- Many tourists seek authentic, local experiences. They want to engage with local culture, traditions, and cuisine, rather than opting for mass tourism.
Visitor Expectation Challenges in Seychelles

The need for Adventure Tourism

• Increasingly, visitors want to experience adventure instead of just the sun, sea and sand experience

Service Excellence

• Visitors expect excellent service offered by skilled individuals, representative of our destination.
Initiatives/policies adopted by the Seychelles' tourism department to address the challenges of visitor expectations

Sustainability
- Re-branding of our Sustainable label into a programme called Sustainability Seychelles
- Development of a Sustainable Tourism policy

Improved Digital Experience
- Expansion of the Tourism department's Digital marketing team
- Good collaboration with local digital marketing experts
- Newly launched mobile app

The need for an Authentic Creole experience
- Creation of a dedicated unit in the department responsible for cultural audits and product planning
- Launch of the Creole Rendez Vous brand

The need for Adventure Tourism
- Prioritisation to diversify our product offerings
- Our commitment to low impact high value tourism and the need to increase visitor spend

Service Excellence
- Launch of the 'Lospitalite Lafyerte Sesel' programme. This is a national service excellence programme aimed at elevating the level of service in the country.
 Initiatives/policies adopted by the Seychelles' tourism department to address the impact of the challenges of visitor expectations on HRD

Development of a Tourism Human Resource Development (THRD) strategy since 2022
- Lack of results led to the collaboration with UNWTO for a HR Rapid Needs Assessment in October/November 2023

Development of a THRD web-based platform

Development of a Certificate in Hospitality Management programme with a local training institution – The Guy Morel Institute

Partnerships with local trainers to improve the skills and competencies of small tourism operators

**Strategic Priority:** Facilitate the delivery of a high-performing tourism workforce
The need for an authentic creole experience
• The Tourism department has launched its Creole Rendezvous brand and with it, a series of activities that will enhance visitor experiences in Seychelles.
• The mission is to introduce and promote the diverse array of ‘Creole Rendezvous’ experiences through meticulously crafted activities and events to develop an appreciation of the Seychellois culture and heritage.

Sustainability
• 30% of the room stock in Seychelles were recognised under the previous Seychelles Sustainable Tourism Label.
• With the rebranded Sustainable Seychelles brand, more tourism businesses will be recognised for efforts being done. The Minister for Foreign Affairs and Tourism remarked that the launch of the re-brand is our “commitment to preserve what makes Seychelles extraordinary”.

Improved Digital experience
• Launched in 2021, ParrAPI is an online platform which provides suppliers with an easy, cost-effective way to increase their online marketing exposure across as many digital channels as possible.
• It is a great way to help enhance digital presence and provide relevant, and updated information across various channels, readily available for consumers.
• The aim is to push the platform to get maximum tourism businesses to register and create listings, in order to get up-to-date information on our Official Destination website.
Success stories

The need for Adventure Tourism

• The Tourism Department has recently launched its Strategic Plan 2023-2026 and in there, the need to look at visitors which can give the country more value has been emphasised upon. The Principal Secretary for Tourism, Mrs. Sherin Francis stated that “This is what we call higher value tourism,”. There is the need to search for visitors that will spend more, while they need to feel that they are getting value for their money, hence the need for activities related to adventure tourism.

Service Excellence

• The Lospitalite Lafyerte Sesel programme was launched in 2021. The aim of the programme service excellence programme is to cultivate a culture of excellent service amongst the local population.

• A success of this programme has been the establishment of Lospitalite Tourism Clubs in all the public schools in Seychelles (both primary and secondary) and even the main private schools. Most of the clubs have also been adopted by a tourism business, which is helping to enhance students' experience.
Tourism Human Resource Development in Seychelles

• One of the strategic objectives of the Tourism department is to facilitate the delivery of a high-performing tourism workforce by establishing a framework to continuously develop and support the workforce in consistently delivering a first-class service.

• The Tourism sector of Seychelles needs a labour force with the right skill set to cater to international demands – a change in visitor expectations.

• Training and capacity building in the Seychelles Tourism sector must align with international best practices and standards, and an HR Needs Assessment and Planning for HR Development in the tourism sector is essential to identify skills needs and shortages and determine appropriate actions to mitigate gaps.

• To identify needs and opportunities to strengthen human resources development for the tourism sector, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Tourism of Seychelles has requested the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) to field a mission of a tourism human resources expert to conduct a tourism sector human resource needs assessment and to prepare a road map for HR development in the tourism sector.

• The mission took place from 30th October to 10th November 2023.
Lessons learned

• In 2022, the estimated average monthly tourism employment was at 12,674 out of which, there was an estimated amount of 2,613 foreign talents. A better mechanism must be put in place to track these figures to provide better insights which is why the tourism department has developed a web-based Tourism Human Resource platform to allow operators to provide us with real-time data about their employees.

• Changes in visitor’s expectations and the Seychelles Tourism department’s attempts to address them through recent initiatives, have underscored the critical importance of gaining a comprehensive understanding of the human resource requirements within the tourism industry, a sector upon which our nation heavily relies.

• It is imperative that we empower our existing local talents, facilitating their growth and longevity in this field. However, we must remain mindful that foreign talents will continue to play a significant role in this industry.

• In collaboration with UNWTO, the development of the HR plan is expected to guide us in formulating a practical strategy for achieving the objective. To facilitate the delivery of a high-performing tourism workforce by establishing a framework to continuously develop and support the workforce in consistently delivering a first-class service.
Recommendations

To cope with the impact that changes in visitor expectations have on the Human Resource landscape of the tourism industry of small island state, the following recommendations should be considered:

• Establish and support skill development programs and training initiatives to enhance the competencies of the local workforce. Local tourism employees need to realise the importance of skills enhancement so this should be accompanied by a sensitisation campaign to highlight the importance of in-service professional development.

• Foster partnerships with the Education department and local educational institutions to ensure that graduates are better prepared for careers in the tourism field. Focus should be placed on teachers/trainers as they should have their capacities strengthened for them to share appropriate and correct information about the tourism industry as well as provide good career guidance.

• Tourism departments, with the support of tourism stakeholders should be able to sell the tourism industry as the go-to place for a career with the opportunity to grow and not remain stagnant. It should be promoted as an industry that embraces inclusivity and diversity.

• The tourism department should, with the support of NGOs and tourism associations, promote employee well-being and encourage tourism businesses to offer competitive compensation packages, healthcare benefits, and work-life balance initiatives to improve job satisfaction and retention.

• The tourism department should be on constant lookout to find collaboration opportunities with international tourism organizations and bodies to tap into their expertise and resources for HR development.

• The need to look for ways to encourage tourism stakeholders to provide the tourism department with real-time data and analytics for better informed decisions about HR development.