



Country: Mauritius
Sector: Tourism
Project: Greening the Mauritian Tourism Industry
Grantee: Association des Hôtels de Charme

Acknowledgements

The SWITCH Africa Green programme was developed by the European Commission to support African countries in their transition to an inclusive green economy, the main objective being to promote sustainable development. This is based on sustainable consumption and production (SCP) patterns, while generating growth, creating decent jobs and reducing poverty.

This impact sheet on 'Greening the Mauritian Tourism Industry' provides a snapshot of results and achievements of the project under the Green Business Development Component of Phase I (2014-2019) of the SWITCH Africa Green programme. This component supported micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) to apply and adopt SCP practices in their business operations.

The project was implemented by Association des Hôtels de Charme with the support of the SWITCH Africa Green National Focal Point, Mrs D. Sin Lan NG, staff of the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change, Mrs S. Meeheelaul and Mrs M. Outim, and the National Coordinator, Dr Asha Poonyth-Seeworam, UN Resident Coordinator's Office, Mauritius. The grants were managed by United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) and coordinated by Celia Marquez with support from Mercy Gatobu.

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The impact sheet was compiled by Sheila Karue consultant, UNEP. Editing, layout and design was coordinated by Communication Division, UNEP.

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BACKGROUND

The Tourism sector is constantly growing with an estimated 6.2 billion tourists travelling by 2020. The trend is shifting towards more environmentally conscious tourists and eco-tourism is on the rise. The greatest impact however is from hotels making maximum use of the triple bottom-line to include social and economic aspects to their growth. The inclusiveness of such tourism operators determines their sustainability and overall performance to boost innovation and reduce their impact on the immediate environment.

SWITCH Africa Green supported the implementation of the project on greening the tourism sector in Mauritius, which aimed to preserve Mauritius and Rodrigues as pristine destinations and assist MSMEs in the hotel sector to green their processes.

Beneficiaries

The project engaged 40 MSME hotels in the tourism sector of Mauritius.

Objectives

- Raise awareness of MSME hotels on environmental issues related to the tourism sector
- Disseminate the best practices manual, together with an implementation guide, based on a do-it-yourself (DIY) principle, to enable MSMEs to implement environmental management systems best practices
- Promote implementation of best practices towards sustainable tourism and coastal zone protection
- Assist MSMEs with green business practices through developing skills and implementing easy steps

- Promote participation of informal businesses such as hawkers, taxi drivers, restaurants, etc. to offer clustered services, thus empowering them for effective supply chain integration

Outputs

Improved stakeholder participation in green economy policy development

The project facilitated policy dialogue to make the Mauritian Sustainable Tourism Standard accessible to MSMEs in the hotels and tourism industry. The Association des Hôtels de Charme (AHC) was included on the board of the Tourism Authority technical working group for sustainable tourism.

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Collaboration with the Rodrigues Regional Assembly and Commission for Environment in Rodrigues was also facilitated to promote implementing the project in hotels on Rodrigues Island.

Improved capacities of Business Development Services (BDS) to promote SCP practices by MSMEs

The project supported a total of 40 MSMEs in the hotel and tourism sector in Mauritius to undertake a gap analysis of their operations in terms of resource use. The water and energy baselines for the MSMEs were taken and their capacity developed on how to improve consumption and efficiency.

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Improved capacities of workers in green sectors

The project supported training the workers in the MSMEs in greening their businesses. Experts from the National Productivity and Competitiveness Council and the University of Mauritius provided the training to both hotel and value chain staff. As a result, 275 people benefitted through workshops and training seminars. An additional 175 hotel staff were trained on the job by the experts on SCP practices.

Training schemes and programmes were developed and a technical assistance guidebook was compiled to support individual hotels in implementing SCP practices, data collection and evidence-based improvement.

The Environmental Management System (EMS) Best Practices Manual was revised to include

self-assessments, SCP concepts and performance monitoring tools.

A self-implementation guidebook was developed and disseminated to all participants upon project closure. The guidebook was translated to french, which the majority of local people understand.

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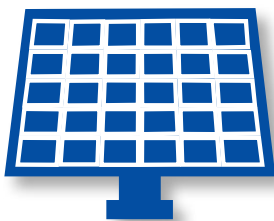
Improved awareness

The project raised awareness in 2,237 people during its implementation phase and 80 MSMEs were also informed on SCP practices and sustainable tourism.

Outcomes

Uptake of SCP practices by MSMEs

Fifty-five per cent of the MSMEs reported adopting SCP practices in their respective hotels. The measures included replacing lightbulbs with LED bulbs, installing solar heating panels, using a room key card system to automatically turn off lights when the key card is removed, rainwater harvesting, and aerators fitted in the taps. The MSMEs reported a decrease in energy and water consumption.



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Improved management systems in the MSMEs

Results of the audits of the MSMEs undertaken provided management with accurate data to inform decision making. There was also improved compliance with legal requirements by those MSMEs who implemented the SCP practices.

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Facilitated access to finance for green MSMEs

The grantee started discussions with SUNREF, a financing programme of the Agence Française de Développement (AFD), on modalities of collaboration for green loans to the MSMEs investing in energy saving measures.



Impacts

Environmental impacts

The MSMEs reported a reduction of waste in their hotels after implementation of the project. The waste was reduced through measures such as sustainable sourcing which reduced waste in the form of packaging, new cleaning methods and reduction in food waste.

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Economic impacts

Energy and resource efficiency by the MSMEs led to lower costs of operation which translated to increased profit margins. The MSMEs reported an average monthly saving of USD277 after implementing SCP measures.

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Lessons learnt

- Top management commitment is key in ensuring necessary investments are made to maintain the sustainability of the SCP practices adopted by the MSMEs. This also calls for further capacity building to obtain management buy-in.
- The MSMEs have minimal human resources and members of staff face difficulties in balancing between availability for training and carrying out their duties. Training needs to be offered in a manner that presents value addition to the enterprises.
- Proper record keeping and measuring parameters enable MSMEs to track their consumption and production patterns thereby prioritizing areas in which to implement SCP measures.



“We got involved with the SWITCH Africa Green as part of our SUNCARE programme, as we needed to find innovative ways to recycle our waste. We implemented a waste management programme... in one activity we incorporated an inhouse water bottling system to reduce the use of plastic bottles,”

Ali Abdool, Sustainability specialist, Sun Resorts, Mauritius.



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