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**A TOURISM DEVELOPMENT MODEL  
BASED ON SUSTAINABLE TOURISM  
THE SEYCHELLES: A UNIQUE  
ARCHIPELAGO IN THE TROPICS**

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**A TOURISM DEVELOPMENT MODEL BASED ON SUSTAINABLE TOURISM.  
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**0. Abstract**

The archipelago of the Seychelles in the tropics (Africa) is one example of a tourist destination which directs its tourism policy to a development model based on a concept of sustainable tourism, that is quality tourism. It consists in reviewing and increasing the quality of tourism services and restricting the quantitative capacity, mainly of the tourist accommodation, taking into account the host population, the economy and the environment. Although imbedded in the history of policy, it was principally a reaction to the pressure on the environment due to the tourism and economic development of the Seychelles.

This paper will analyse the tourism development of the Seychelles. It examines the presents strenghts, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of tourism in the Seychelles and gives recommendations for a better appraisal of sustainable tourism.

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## 1. Sustainable development in tourism

There is still no agreement about what sustainable development actually means. Two main perspectives exist, an ecological and an economic one. From within a 'green' perspective what needs to be sustained is the natural resource base. Recently eight principles of sustainability were set out in the Second World Conservation Strategy, 'Caring for the Earth' (IUCN-UNEP-WWF: 1991). The view now taken is that there is a need to conserve in order to develop, rather than the reverse.

From an economic perspective there are several definitions. According to Barbier (1987) the primary objective is reducing the absolute poverty of the world's poor through providing lasting and secured living conditions. Pearce (1987) writes that sustainable economic development involves maximising the net benefits of economic development, subject to maintaining the use and quality of natural resources over time. Bartelmus (1987) argues that sustainable development maintains a particular level of income by conserving the sources of that income. The Brundtland Commission Report (1987) speaks of development which meets the needs and aspirations of the present without compromising the ability to meet those of the future. According to these definitions it is not the environment which needs to be sustained, but present and future levels of production and consumption (Redclift, 1992).

According to the AIEST-Congress 1991 (l'Association Internationale d'Experts Scientifiques du Tourisme, St.-Gall, Suisse) sustainable tourism harmonizes economic, social and ecological interests. The sustainability concept offers the integration of the activities of recreation with those of production in other sectors of the economy with a common objective to "keep the integrity of the natural and cultural environment" (Dragicevic, 1991 : 44). We subscribe to this idea and the one of Erlet Cater: "To be truly sustainable any form of tourism development should meet the needs of the host population in terms of improved living standards both in the short and long term, should satisfy the demands of a growing number of tourists and continue to attract them in order to meet the first aim, and should safeguard the natural environment in order to achieve both of the preceding aims" (Cater, 1991: 85-86).

How quickly or slowly policies of sustainable tourism development are adopted depends on the type of country, the political constitution, the level of development of the civilian society, the already established power of transnational corporations which manage whole regions and often entire countries (Dragicevic, 1991 : 57). In this respect, the Seychelles are well equipped to direct their tourism policy to a development model based on sustainable tourism.

## 2. General description of the Seychelles

### *- Geographical situation*

The Seychelles (GMT +4) are situated in Africa in the western part of the Indian Ocean, 4° south of the Equator, 1,590 km east of Mombasa (Kenia), 930 km north of Madagascar and 2,800 km southwest of Bombay (India).

The Seychelles consist of 115 islands, 40 of which are granite and more than 60 coral islands. The total land area covers 455 sq km; it is the smallest independent country of Africa. The granite islands form the largest group and are centred around Mahé, the main island (154 sq km), with the smallest capital in the world, Victoria (25.000 inhabitants). Mahé is 27 km long and up to a maximum of 11 km wide. Mahé is very mountainous; the highest point is formed by the Morne Seychellois (905 m).

With a minimum temperature of 24,4 °C and a maximum temperature of 29,8 °C, the climate is warm and tropical throughout the year. There are 7 hours of sunshine everyday. Of the two seasons the dry season is the shortest, lasting from June until October and has the coolest temperatures. The rainy season from November until May has a peak in rainfall in December and January. The temperature of the sea varies from 23°C to 27°C, even rising to between 28°C and 31°C in the rainy season.

### *- Political System*

The Seychelles have been a sovereign republic since 26 June 1976. Until that time it belonged to the United Kingdom (from 1814 until 1976) and before that time to France (from 1756 until 1814). Although France took possession of the Seychelles in 1756 by placing "a Possession Stone", the first inhabitants arrived on the Seychelles in 1771. The Seychelles are now part of the Commonwealth. The first president of the independent Seychelles was Mancham, but a year later, prime minister Albert René carried out a coup d'état. Soon after that coup elections took place, René had been elected president and a new constitution was formulated. His party, the Seychelles People's Progressive Front (SPPF) became the only political party in the country. The first elections in which more



than one party was allowed to take part, took place in July 1992. Since then there has been a multi-party system.

- *Population*

The population is now approximately 70,000, 90 % of which lives on the main island Mahé, 7 % on Praslin, 2 % on La Digue and 1 % on the outer islands. The population is of African, Asian and European origin and racial discrimination is not found, although the lightness of colour is still considered an important status attribute among the main islanders who can lay claim to a lighter pedigree (Wilson, 1994: 26). There are three official languages, Creol, English and French. The Roman Catholic church is the predominant religion. There is free education, free medical care, a minimum allowance, a retirement pay for everybody and a full employment scheme. There is a good road network throughout the main islands, cheap and efficient public transport, well constructed housing, good electricity and TV and telephone services. The population is very young, 55 % is younger than 25, and the life expectancy rate is around 70 years. In comparison with other Third World countries the Seychelles are very prosperous with a low infant mortality rate (17.4 per thousands live births), a high literacy rate (85 %), and a high income (GNP) per head in 1990 (4,670 \$) (World Bank). So the Seychelles have a ranking of number 72 in the list of 224 countries in the world. Estimates of Gross Domestic Product per head of population has risen steadily over the last 20 years - for example, 1976 : 925 \$, 1982 : 1,400 \$, 1985 : 2,247 \$, 1988 : 3,800 \$, 1990 : 5,000 \$, 1991 : 5,850 \$ (Wilson, 1994 : 27).

- *Economic importance of tourism*

*Table 1* gives an overview of some indicators of tourism's economic importance, from which can be concluded that tourism is an important economic sector in Seychelles. Gross tourism earnings declined from 646 million Seychelles Rupees (SR) in 1990 to 526 million SR in 1991. Since then they are rising again: 600 million SR in 1992 and 607 million in 1993. Tourism accounts for 70 % of foreign currency earnings. Almost one fifth of employment is situated in the tourism industry, which can be seen by *table 2*. On the whole, the macro-economic development of the Seychelles consists primarily in the development of the tourism sector. This renders the Seychelles economy very vulnerable,

with the danger of a one basket economy. Although the government tries to diversify, tourism will remain the most important source of income, because the archipelago is too small to develop other activities.

*Table 1 : Indicators of tourism's economic importance in the Seychelles, 1980 - 1991.*

	1980	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991
Gross tourism earnings (SRs mn)	326	336	347	379	440	522	646	522
Share of GDP (%)	34.6	27.9	26.9	27.2	28.8	30.0	32.5	...
Share of goods & services exports (%)	69.6	57.8	69.8	70.0	59.7	62.6	61.2	...
Average expenditure per visitor (SRs'000)								
Tourism employment ('000 jobs)	4.31	4.63	5.20	5.29	5.69	6.06	6.27	5.80
	3.21	2.68	2.83	3.22	3.68	4.02	4.34	4.50
(SRS = Seychelles rupees ( 1 = 7 BEF)								

*Source: The Economist Intelligence Unit, International Tourism Reports, Dossier The Seychelles, 1992, p. 59.*

*Table 2 : Employment in selected occupations in the Seychelles, 1969 - 1990.*

Year	Agriculture Forestry Fishing	Mining Manufacturing Construction	Hotels and Res- taurants	Transport, Distribution and Communication		Services
				Tourism Related	Other	
1969	4,468	1,545	-	800		3,813
1970	4,468	2,054	987	297		3,674
1971	5,167	5,300	1,129	982		4,827
1977	4,864	5,610	2,299	727	1,331	6,582
1987	2,319	3,469	2,465	757	2,861	7,608
1990	2,199	4,302	3,325	1,018	3,731	8,937
1991	2,181	4,279	3,362	1,056	3,842	9,238
1992	2,144	4,412	3,370	1,109	4,027	9,394
1993	2,153	4,605	3,449	1,121	4,092	9,818

*Sources : Wilson D., 1994, 30: "Compiled from Seychelles in Figures (1991), Africa South of the Sahara (1979-1980 : 833), Provisional Census Results (1971: 5) and Report of the Labour Department (1969 - 1970). Comparison between the various years should be made with caution as categories have almost certainly changed, and the earlier statistics are sometimes questionable. For further details of changes during the construction boom of the late 1960s/early 1970s see Wilson (1979 : 213)".*  
*. Seychelles in Figures (1994).*

- *New direction of tourism policy*

The Seychelles are appreciated because of the uniqueness of the scenery. It is the only archipelago in the world which originated from granite blocks. All the other islands are corallite or volcanic. In 1990 the Seychelles Government directed its tourism policy towards a new concept, that is quality tourism, a concept of a sustainable tourism development. According to the Seychelles Government this concept of quality tourism consists of reviewing and improving the quality of tourism services rendered, and restricting or controlling the quantitative and qualitative growth of foreign tourism and tourist accommodation alike. It should both maintain the economic benefits accrued from tourism and minimise the associated risks to the social fabric and physical aspects (Chetty, 1991 : 103). Two facts were important for this new direction. Firstly, the high increase of the population and the growing importance of foreign tourist consumption for the Seychelles economy. Secondly, the social and environmental consequences of the physical presence of foreign visitors on the territory of the Seychelles. *Table 3* shows the growth of the population since the first settlement in 1771. It grows by 3,2 % each year. The growth of tourist arrivals is shown by *table 4* and *figure 1*. In 1972, one year after the opening of the international airport in 1971, the number of visitors were five times higher than in 1971. The quick rise of the tourist arrivals started in 1983 with a top year in 1990 with more than 100,000 tourists, and a 12 % increase over the peak year 1990 in 1993 with 116,000 visitors and 1,115,330 visitor nights. In comparison to the population there are more visitors than local people during one year as shown by *figure 2*. *Table 5* makes a comparison between the population and the number of tourists for some other small islands.

*Table 3 : Growth of the population of the Seychelles, 1771 - 1993.*

Year	Population
1771	28
1801	2,121
1821	5,782
1871	11,179
1901	19,237
1911	22,691
1921	24,523
1931	27,444
1941	32,654
1951	34,370
1961	42,936
1971	54,695
1977	61,786
1987	68,412
1990	69,507
1991	70,349
1992	70,763
1993	72,253

Source :

. 1987 Census Report, Seychelles, p. 25.

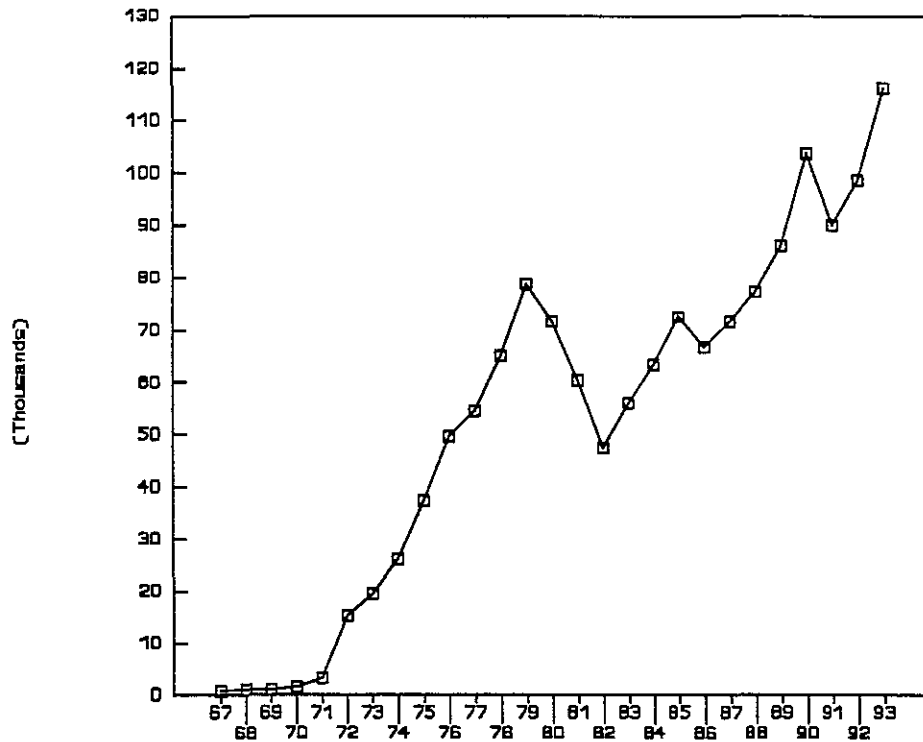
. Seychelles in Figures (1994)

*Table 4 : Number of tourists to the Seychelles, 1967 - 1993.*

Year	Number of tourists
1967	771
1968	1,059
1969	1,029
1970	1,622
1971	3,175
1972	15,278
1973	19,484
1974	25,932
1975	37,321
1976	49,498
1977	54,490
1978	64,995
1979	78,852
1980	71,762
1981	60,425
1982	47,280
1983	55,867
1984	63,417
1985	72,524
1986	66,782
1987	71,626
1988	77,401
1989	86,093
1990	103,770
1991	90,050
1992	98,547
1993	116,180

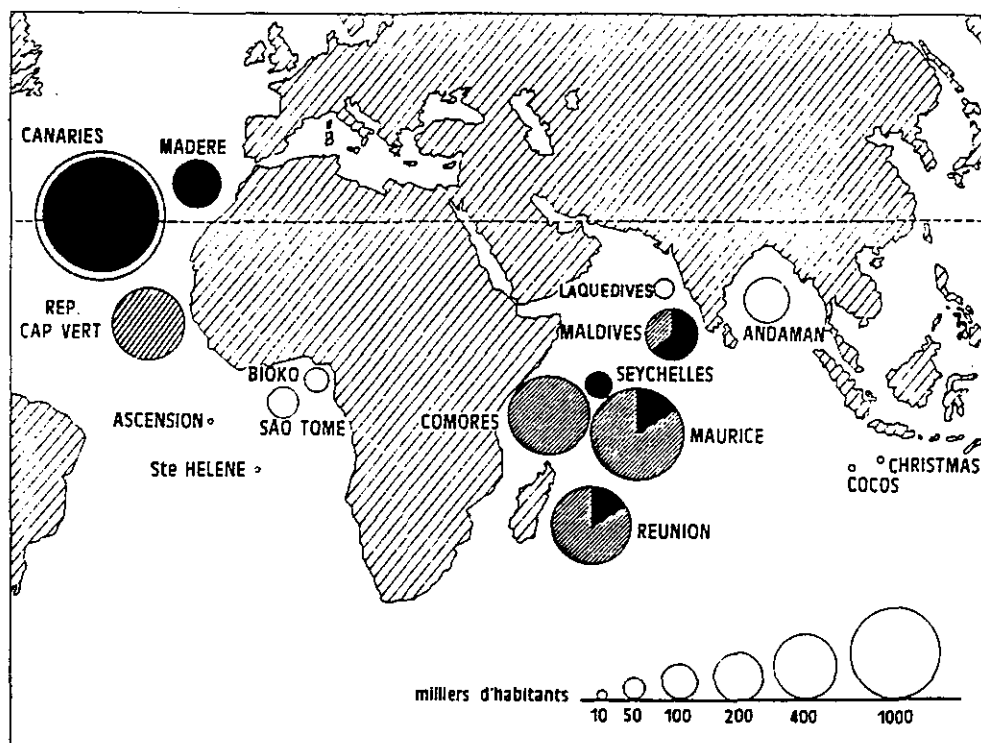
Source : Seychelles Tourist Office in Brussels.

Figure 1: Growth of the number of tourists to the Seychelles, 1967-1993.



Source: Seychelles Tourist Office in Brussels, own calculations.

Figure 2: Proportion of visitors in comparison with the population in one year for small islands in the Indian and Atlantic Ocean.



- nombre de visiteurs au moins 10 fois inférieur au nombre d'habitants
- ◐ nombre de visiteurs égal au quart des habitants
- plus de visiteurs que d'habitants
- 1 cercle = deux fois plus de visiteurs que d'habitants
- 2 cercles = quatre fois plus...
- 3 cercles = six fois plus...
- 4 cercles = huit fois plus...
- 5 cercles = dix fois plus...
- nombre de visiteurs non précisé

Source : Huetz de Lempis A., *Collection Iles et Archipels*, 1989, p. 51.

Table 5 : Population and number of tourists for small islands

Country	Population (P)(x 1,000)	Number of tourists (T) (1990)	T/P
Antigua and Barbuda	77	197,046	2.56
Bahamas	253	1,561,600	6.17
Barbados	255	432,067	1.69
Bermuda	61	433,650	7.11
British Virgin Island	13	160,046	12.31
Cayman Islands	27	253,158	9.38
Cook Islands	18	33,882	1.88
Montserrat	13	18,000	1.38
Seychelles	68	103,770	1.53

Source : WTO, *Yearbook of Tourism Statistics*, 1992, Bartholomew, *Mini World Factfile*, 1993.

### **3. Strategic analysis of the Seychelles with regard to the present tourism development**

Due to two study-visits to the Seychelles (one in 1991 during four weeks combined with the 41st congress in the Seychelles about 'Quality Tourism - Concept of a Sustainable Tourism Development, Harmonizing Economic, Social and Ecological Interests' and a second one in 1992 during five weeks), and contacts with policy makers and informal contacts with local people and expatriates, we are able to analyse the present tourism development of the Seychelles. Our main Seychellois respondents are *Maggy Delcy*, Director of the Seychelles Tourist Information Office in Brussels, *Lalanne*, the Principal Secretary of Tourism in the Seychelles, *Monica Chetty*, Director of the Tourism Department in the Seychelles, *Nirmal Jivan Shah*, Director of the Environment Department in the Seychelles, *Guy Lionnet*, Technical Adviser of the Ministry of Environment, Planning and External Relations in the Seychelles, *Selwyn Gendron*, Secretary-General of the Ministry of Industry in the Seychelles, *Kantilal Jivan Shah*, Salesman in Victoria, the capital of the Seychelles.

The theoretical model which is used, is based on the SWOT-model (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) of Igor Ansoff and the STEEPV-model (Social, Technological, Economic, Ecological, Political, Values) of the Open Business School, located in Milton Keynes in the United Kingdom. The analysis will be based on characteristics which are important for sustainable tourism.

#### **3.1. Analysis of the internal environment**

##### ***3.1.1. Basic strengths as a sustainable tourist destination***

The Seychelles basic *strengths* as a tourist destination are grouped according to the four conditions of Dragicevic (1991: 57) for adopting policies of sustainable tourism development:

- the type of the country;
- the political constitution;
- the level of development of the civilian society;
- the already established power of transnational corporations.

- *the type of the country*

Concerning *the type of the country* the Seychelles have a relatively stable economy and a stable political situation because of the recent democratization process. It can be easily reached by at least two ways of transportation, by air and by cruises. Direct flights are available from Paris (duration 10h), London, Frankfurt, Zürich, Rome, Nairobi, Singapore, Johannesburg, Dubai, Mauritius and La Réunion. Charter flights are not allowed. Domestic transport by car, bus, air and boat is very good.

- *the political constitution*

Interesting for the Seychelles is that it aims at developing *policies* in harmony with the environment. The Government Policy concerning tourism is based on aspects of sustainable tourism (Chetty, 1991: 103-119). The prime objective is set at maximising long term net foreign exchange from tourism by increasing the quality of the services. In pursuing this major goal the government also provides for a balanced development of the islands, the preservation and management of the culture and customs of the people of the Seychelles, the improvement of the quality of life of the Seychellois, the conservation and management of the existing unique, but limited, physical resources, and the environment. The government is in favour of higher quality tourism in the Seychelles and aims to achieve this by controlling and limiting investments and, thus, the growth of tourist facilities, and by formulating a new product policy which assures preservation of the natural and physical environment.

To reach this objective the Seychelles Government has fixed the maximum number of tourists by limiting the *accommodation capacity* in licensed establishments on the main islands to 4,000 beds (Mahé: 2,950, Praslin: 950, La Digue: 100), and on the outer islands to 500 beds. In 1991 the bed capacity was 3,487 and 200 beds, respectively. A growth of 13 % of bed capacity in the main islands and of 60 % in the outer islands is still possible. A clearly defined product improvement policy will permit the required increase in quality and range of tourist services offered and consequently provide for increases in revenue through higher tariffs and rates charged to the customer. The ensuing rise in per capita spending should more than compensate the reduction in the rise of tourist numbers, according to the Seychelles Government. Figures of the 1990-1994 National Development



Plan for the tourism sector can be found in *table 6*, the hotel, guesthouses and catering accommodation for 1992 in *table 7*, and the room occupancy rates in *table 8*. *Figure 3* shows the touristic infrastructure on the main islands Mahé from which it is clear that the West Coast is provided mostly by hotels.

Important for a sustainable policy is also to dispose of stringent *construction rules* for tourist and other accommodation. The maximum height of the buildings in the Seychelles is restricted to the average height of the palmtrees, the architecture must have a Seychellois character, the capacity has to be limited to 50/60 rooms of a high standard (preferably equivalent to an internationally graded 4 star hotel). Only hotels and guesthouses are allowed, camp sites are forbidden. In the expansion of accommodation with a high revenue earning potential, priority will be given to the native population.

The Seychelles are characterized by a history of *environmental policies*. In 1969 the Seychelles Government introduced environmental protection measures, such as the creation of National Parks and Reserves, which now cover over 40 % of the limited land area and include two UNESCO listed World Natural Heritages Sites, the atoll Aldabra and the Vallée de Mai on Praslin. These areas could constitute major tourist attractions but access is limited to restricted areas, during certain periods and for certain amount of tourists. Among the recent policies related to tourist activities, measures preventing beach erosion or pollution should be noted. Stricter control is exercised on the removal of sand for construction and the erection of buildings on beaches. Furthermore, strict measures have been introduced concerning litter on the beaches, noise pollution by motorbikes, use of insecticides to destroy biting midges, sewage outlets, annoying or dangerous water sports and the like. The amount of cars is also limited because there exist a quota of 25 cars per fleet for car Hire Operations and taxis, and a 200 % tax on the purchase price of new and second hand cars. In June 1990 the Seychelles Government presented its "Environment Management Plan of the Seychelles 1990 to 2000" (EMPS). This plan sets out the measures and activities necessary to achieve a sustainable development of the Seychelles. One important project of EMPS is the protection of the Hawksbill Turtle, which is threatened with extinction. Its shell is a favoured object for making souvenirs.

*- the level of development of the civilian society*

Concerning *the level of development of the civilian society* the Seychelles are very prosperous in comparison with other Third World countries with a low infant mortality rate (17.4 per thousands live births), a high literacy rate (85 %), and a high income (GNP) per head in 1990 (4,670 \$) (World Bank). So the Seychelles have a ranking of number 72 in the list of 224 countries in the world. The Seychelles people speak three languages: English, French and Creol. It is a multiracial society, which provides a decent standard of living for their inhabitants. Although the Seychelles are a Third World country, everybody has a house, running water, electricity, enough food, free medical care and free education. The Seychelles have a reputation for being a remarkably safe place, concerning the violence against tourists. The population is now approximately 70,000, 90 % of which lives on the main island Mahé. The population is very young, 55 % is younger than 25, and the life expectancy rate is around 70 years.

*- the already established power of transnational corporations*

Sustainability also means that the income related to tourism stays in the country itself. Therefore it is important to investigate *the already established power of transnational corporations*. A limited amount of tour operators organizes holidays to the Seychelles : Jet Tours, Odysseus, Uniclam 2000. Only two international hotels chains , Méridien and Sheraton, have hotel accommodation in the Seychelles, all the others are locally owned. Charter flights are not allowed and no tourist may enter the Seychelles without a residence permit. The Seychelles have various Tourist Information Offices in the main countries of origin of tourists, Great Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Belgium (since June 1992), the nited States of America, Japan, and Kenia.

Table 6: 1990-1994 National Development Plan: tourism sector (SRs mn unless otherwise indicated).

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	Total 90-94
Total investment of which:	74.7	119.8	107.5	67.0	18,8	387.8
public sector	41.0	103.6	68.3	33.8	1.1	247.8
private sector	33.7	16.2	39.2	33.2	17.7	140.0
Hotel bed targets (n°)	3,672	3,822	4,378	4,568	4,568	24.4 <sup>(b)</sup>
Actual n° of beds	3,590	3,680	4,000 <sup>(a)</sup>	...	...	40.4 <sup>(b)</sup>
Total arrival targets ('000)	93.4	106.2	115.1	124,0	131.1	
Actual n° of arrivals	103.8	90.1	105.0 <sup>(a)</sup>	116.0	...	
Capacity utilisation plan <sup>(a)</sup>	76.7	83.7	79.0	81,2	86.5	

(a) EIU estimates. (b) Figures relate to % change during 1990-94.

Source: *The Economist Intelligence Unit, International Tourism Reports, Seychelles, 1992 : 64.*

Table 7: Hotel, guesthouses and catering accommodation in the Seychelles, 1992.

Hotel Accommodation	N° of hotels	Total N° of rooms	Total N° of beds		% of total beds	
<b>size</b>						
1-20 rooms	11	168	346		11.0	
21-49 rooms	11	344	678		21.4	
50-99 rooms	2	133	266		8.4	
100+ rooms	6	937	1,874		59.2	
<b>total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>1,582</b>	<b>3,164</b>		<b>100.0</b>	
<b>hotel ownership</b>						
Cosproh (1)	9	813	1,632		51.6	
private of which:	21	769	1,632		48.4	
- individuals	11	376	736		23.3	
- companies	10	393	796		25.1	
<b>total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>1,582</b>	<b>3,164</b>		<b>100.00</b>	
<b>Hotel Management</b>	<b>N° of hotels</b>	<b>Total N° of rooms</b>	<b>Total N° of beds</b>		<b>% of total beds</b>	
Seychelles Hotels	2	260	520		16.4	
Paradise Resort	3	138	276		8.7	
Méridien	2	170	340		10.7	
Island Relais Ltd	2	32	64		2.0	
Ailee Development	1	206	412		13.0	
Hotel Management Co Ltd	1	150	300		9.5	
Sheraton	1	173	346		10.9	
Kuoni	1	103	206		6.5	
Sunset Beach Ltd	1	24	48		1.5	
Others	16	326	652		20.6	
<b>total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>1,582</b>	<b>3,164</b>		<b>100.0</b>	
<b>Guesthouses and self-catering accommodation</b>	<b>N° of guest-houses</b>	<b>Total N° of rooms</b>	<b>Total N° of beds</b>	<b>Total N° self. cat.</b>	<b>Total N° of rooms</b>	<b>Total N° of beds</b>
<b>size</b>						
1-4 rooms	19	67	145	3	10	20
5-9 rooms	19	122	244	3	23	46
10+ rooms	5	55	110	1	16	32
<b>total</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>244</b>	<b>499</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>98</b>

(1) Cosproh stands for 'Compagnie Seychelloise de Promotion Hotelière', °1976.

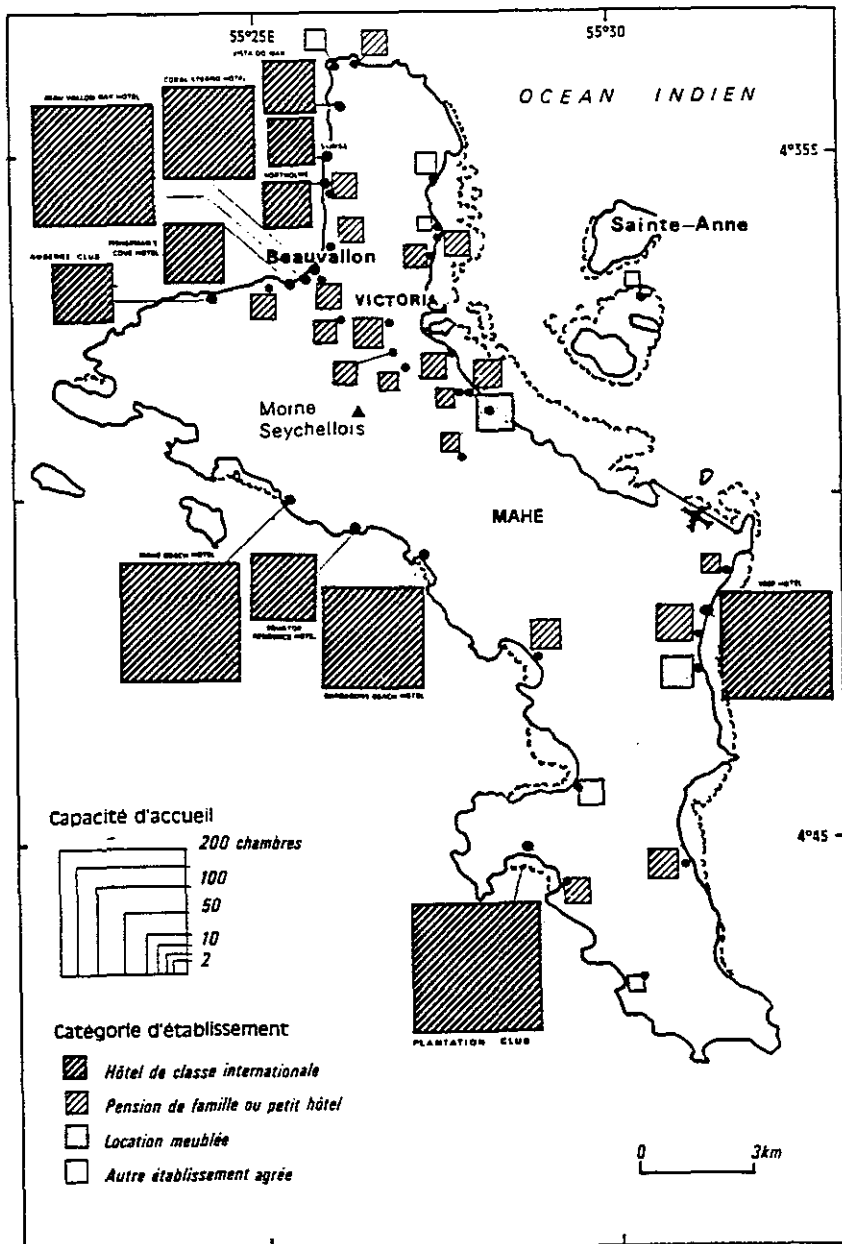
Source: The Economist Intelligence Unit, International Tourism Report, Seychelles, 1992 : 75-77.

Table 8: Room occupancy rates by type of accommodation and location, 1980-91.

	1980	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993
Hotels & self-catering	68	74	76	71	68	75	63	-	-
Mahé Island	70	76	78	72	66	73	60	-	-
Other islands	59	68	72	68	75	83	73	-	-
Guest & private houses	39	47	48	50	51	53	51	-	-
Mahé Island	34	46	46	48	49	47	45	-	-
Other islands	34	51	57	57	56	65	61	-	-
Average	-	-	-	-	-	72	61	64	65

Source: The Economist Intelligence Unit, International Tourism Report, Seychelles, 1992 : 79. Seychelles in Figures, 1994.

Figure 3: The tourism infrastructure on Mahé in the Seychelles.



Source: Doumenge J.P., 1989 : 257.

### 3.1.2. Basic weaknesses as a sustainable tourism destination

With regard to the basic *weaknesses* of the Seychelles as a tourist destination a difference is made between tourist supply and demand.

#### Concerning *the tourist supply*:

- Prices in hotels and restaurants are often very high in relation to the quality of services offered.
- There is also a limited amount of inexpensive accommodation. Nearly all hotels are operating well below their potential capacity.
- The Seychelles are only known for their nice beaches and beautiful weather, with limited knowledge of other attractions.
- The personnel is not very motivated due to the quick growth in tourism. Another factor is that they are not trained well enough in providing adequate services.
- The marketing policy puts too much emphasis on selling the Seychelles as a 'dream holiday' with the implication that tourists merely pay a once-only visit.
- The high dependence on tourism in comparison with other economic sectors, with the danger of a one basket economy.
- From *table 9* it is clear that the percentage of tourists paying a return visit fell from 22 % in 1981 to 13 % in 1985, but has since edged up gradually. In 1993 it reached again 22 %. Wilson (1994) states that only 5 % of the tourists who visit the Seychelles return there for another holiday, which means that the Seychelles relies on finding new first-time visitors each year. Table 10 gives some characteristics of the tourism in the Seychelles which shows that the average length of stay is about 10 nights with holiday as the main purpose of visit.

#### *With respect to the tourist demand*:

- It is only the 'rich' tourist, who is not necessarily interested in the unique scenery, who is able to visit the Seychelles.
- The Seychelles are strongly dependent on the tourists from Europe: 71,7 % of visitor arrivals in 1991 stems from Europe, as can be seen by *table 11*.

Table 9: Tourist return visit by country of residence (% paying return visits) 1981-1990.

	1981	1983	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990
UK	21	31	8	12	6	7	12	14
France	19	16	15	17	19	12	16	22
Germany	28	6	17	17	22	16	23	32
Italy	16	14	12	13	13	7	11	14
Switzerland	...	15	8	24	22	13	20	33
Africa	32	23	15	23	24	10	15	22
Other	19	16	17	6	13	8	7	7
Overall	22	15	13	15	15	10	13	17

Source: The Economist Intelligence Unit, International Tourism Reports, Seychelles, 1992 : 71.

Table 10 : Characteristics of tourism, 1990-1993.

Year	Average length of stay (nights)	Purpose of visit		
		holiday	holiday & business	transit
1990	10,1	90 %	4 %	6 %
1991	10,5	92 %	5 %	3 %
1992	10,2	87 %	8 %	5 %
1993	9,6	80 %	8 %	12 %

Source : Seychelles Tourist Office in Brussels

Table 11: Tourist arrivals by country of residence, ('000) 1972 - 1993.

	1972	1976	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993
<b>Europe</b>	<b>7.2</b>	<b>29.4</b>	<b>50.8</b>	<b>45.8</b>	<b>37.8</b>	<b>29.9</b>	<b>37.8</b>	<b>44.5</b>	<b>54.8</b>	<b>55.1</b>	<b>59.6</b>	<b>64.2</b>	<b>68.6</b>	<b>81.2</b>	<b>64.6</b>	<b>79.3</b>	<b>93.9</b>
of which:																	
France	0.3	6.9	14.6	9.9	9.4	7.8	8.8	11.0	12.2	14.1	13.9	14.3	16.3	21.9	15.2	21.4	26.6
UK & Eire	4.9	12.4	12.9	10.4	7.9	4.8	4.1	7.8	9.8	14.0	16.8	19.9	19.9	19.2	14.9	14.3	18.9
Italy	1.0	2.2	8.5	9.1	8.6	6.5	5.7	7.1	11.4	11.5	14.4	14.6	15.2	19.3	15.2	20.9	14.4
Germany	0.4	2.8	5.2	8.8	6.4	5.1	9.8	8.6	10.1	5.9	5.3	5.5	7.4	9.0	9.3	12.9	18.5
Scandinavia	-	0.8	1.3	1.3	1.1	0.8	0.6	0.7	1.6	2.0	2.3	2.4	2.0	2.1	1.4	1.6	1.9
Switzerland	-	1.6	3.5	2.3	1.6	2.5	6.2	5.8	5.6	4.4	3.3	3.1	2.9	2.8	2.5	2.6	3.8
Spain & Portugal	-	0.5	1.3	1.0	0.7	0.7	0.4	0.7	0.7	1.0	1.2	1.3	1.6	2.8	2.1	2.2	5.5
Belgium & Luxemburg	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.9	0.8	1.0	1.0	1.2	1.6
Netherlands	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.4
<b>Africa of which:</b>	<b>6.0</b>	<b>12.9</b>	<b>13.6</b>	<b>12.1</b>	<b>9.4</b>	<b>7.1</b>	<b>8.0</b>	<b>10.0</b>	<b>8.0</b>	<b>6.1</b>	<b>5.6</b>	<b>8.0</b>	<b>11.2</b>	<b>15.9</b>	<b>18.8</b>	<b>12.2</b>	<b>13.5</b>
South Africa	1.2	5.4	3.6	3.6	3.4	2.0	2.7	3.5	2.0	0.9	0.9	2.9	5.0	9.9	11.8	6.1	5.0
East Africa	3.2	2.3	3.7	3.5	2.4	2.1	2.2	1.8	1.9	1.3	1.3	1.4	1.3	1.3	1.1	1.4	1.2
Mauritius	0.4	0.5	0.9	0.9	0.7	0.7	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.4	0.6	0.9	1.1	1.0	1.2	2.4
Réunion	0.9	1.6	1.9	1.4	0.9	0.9	1.2	2.2	1.7	1.8	1.7	1.3	2.1	2.1	3.5	2.1	3.3
<b>Asia of which:</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>9.2</b>	<b>8.8</b>	<b>8.1</b>	<b>7.2</b>	<b>7.6</b>	<b>6.6</b>	<b>7.4</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>2.9</b>	<b>2.7</b>	<b>3.3</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>4.1</b>	<b>4.0</b>
Middle East	-	0.4	2.4	2.4	2.4	1.8	1.8	1.5	1.4	2.3	1.9	1.8	1.9	1.9	1.8	1.9	1.8
Indian Subcontinent	0.6	0.6	2.5	2.1	1.3	1.0	0.9	0.7	0.6	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.5	0.7	0.5
Hong Kong	0.2	1.4	1.3	0.8	0.4	0.5	0.3	0.3	0.6	-	-	-	-	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
Japan	0.6	1.2	2.0	2.2	3.4	3.4	3.9	3.3	4.1	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.9
<b>America of which:</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>3.9</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>1.9</b>	<b>1.9</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>2.4</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>3.8</b>
USA	0.2	1.4	2.7	2.9	2.8	1.7	1.7	1.4	1.3	1.4	1.7	1.6	1.9	1.9	1.8	1.8	3.1
<b>Total Incl. others</b>	<b>15.2</b>	<b>49.5</b>	<b>78.8</b>	<b>71.8</b>	<b>60.4</b>	<b>47.3</b>	<b>55.9</b>	<b>63.4</b>	<b>72.5</b>	<b>66.8</b>	<b>71.6</b>	<b>77.4</b>	<b>86.1</b>	<b>103.8</b>	<b>90.1</b>	<b>98.5</b>	<b>116.1</b>

Source: The Economist Intelligence Unit, International Tourism Report, Dossier Seychelles, 1992, p. 67, and Seychelles Tourist Office in Brussels.



### 3.2. Analysis of the external environment

The external environment is analysed by making use of the STEEPV-analysis method which gives special attention to the sociological, technological, economic, ecological and political environment, and the environment of values.

From a *sociological* point of view we notice as an *opportunity* a tendency towards a greater availability of leisure time, and consequently time spent on holiday. Another aspect in this context is that third world countries hold an increasing attraction as a tourist destination, because of the different way of life. Furthermore, there are the high demands tourists set with regard to hospitality, comfort, safety, tranquility, order, healthy holidays, professionalism. The basic *threats* to the development of tourism in developing countries are the conflicts for equal rights and the strong demands of the population to be considered more important than the tourists.

The progress of automation in the *technological* environment is a threat for the Seychelles because it does not have the money and the knowledge to fulfill this demand. Tourists increasingly ask for easily accessible facilities to cash money, to book excursions and hotels and to obtain information. At the same time one can ask if these demands from tourists must necessarily be fulfilled by developing countries.

Economic recessions in Western Europe are also a threat to far away holiday destinations. With regard to this, the Seychelles are in a better situation than other developing countries because they rely on rich tourists who suffer less from economic crises. A more important threat in the *economic* environment for the Seychelles is the competition of other islands which are cheaper even though tourists think they offer almost the same product. A comparison can be made between the Seychelles and three other small islands in the Indian Ocean : Mauritius, La Réunion and the Comores (cf. *table 12*). *Figure 4* shows the seasonal change of prices in these islands. The prices do not only differ from season to season, but also from islands although the hotel classification is comparable (cf. *table 13*).

The main opportunities are found in the *ecological* environment. Increasingly, people seem to be interested in ecotourism and are more sensitive to the impact on the environment. This also induces a threat, because more tourist enterprises offer packages

based on ecotourism which can make the Seychelles less unique according to tourists. Besides, ecotourism, which is only limited to specific areas, attracts a relatively large amount of people, as a consequence of which these areas are very vulnerable.

The *political* environment in the Seychelles, that is to say the transition from a one-party system to a multi-party system, together with the fact that there is more freedom than before to start a business, gives more opportunities to private enterprises to operate in the tourism industry. The fact that a country is democratic and that the basic human rights are guaranteed, have a positive impact on the attraction of a country.

The development in the environment of *values* gives more attention to the conservation of the culture of the local people rather than adapting it to the culture of the tourist.

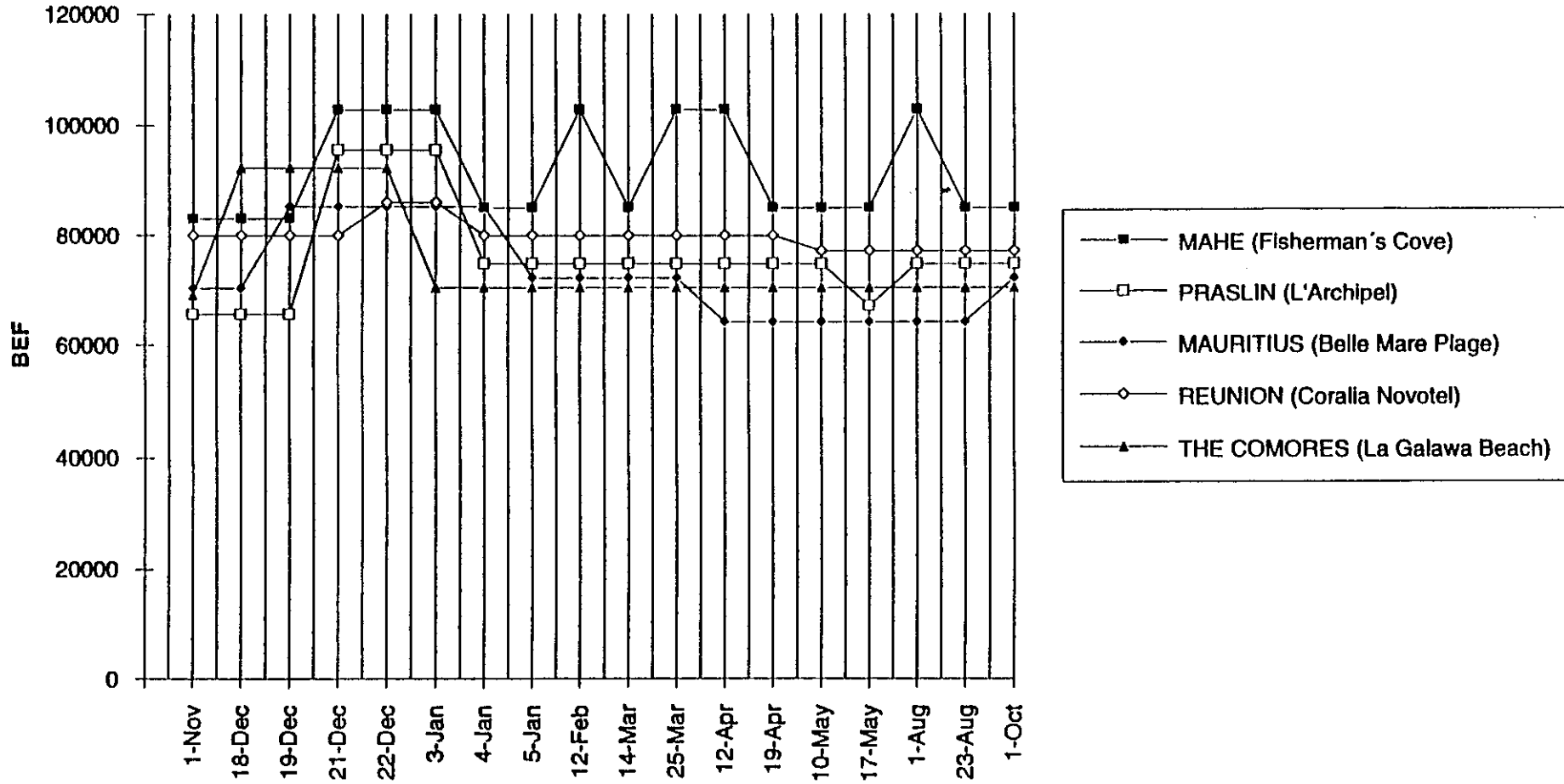
This analysis results in a different tourism development strategy based on sustainable tourism than on quality tourism only. The main ideas will be discussed in part 4.

Table 12 : Comparison between the Seychelles, Mauritius, La Réunion, the Comores as tourist destinations.

	Seychelles		Comores		Mauritius		La Réunion	
	1989	1990	1989	1990	1989	1990	1989	1990
<b>Arrivals of tourist (thousands)</b>	86	104	13	8	263	292	182	200
<b>Cruise passenger arrivals (thousands)</b>	2	8	2	2	15	17	-	-
<b>Arrivals by region (thousands)</b>								
Africa	11	16	6	2	118	132	30	34
Americas	3	3	-	-	2	2	-	-
Europe	69	81	6	6	115	122	139	153
South Asia	-	-	-	-	5	8	-	-
West Asia	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
Asia-Oceania	1	2	1	-	7	8	-	-
<b>Average length of stay</b>	10.7	10.1	-	-	12.2	12.0	17	17
<b>Accommodation</b>								
rooms	1,696	-	317	317	3,605	4,603	1,261	1,558
bed places	3,432	-	634	634	7,374	9,572	1,675	-
occupancy rates (%)	61	-	42	-	77,8	76,7	56,5	54,1

Source: Results of the Erasmus Report, LUC, 1993.

Figure 4: Seasonal change of prices in the Seychelles, Mauritius, La Réunion, the Comores.



Source: Results of the Erasmus Report, LUC, 1993.

Table 13: Hotel classification in the Seychelles, Mauritius, La Réunion, the Comores.

THE SEYCHELLES		MAURITIUS	
(M=Mahe, P=Praslin, LD=La Digue, F=Fregate, S=Silhouette, DEN=Denis B=Bird, DES=Descroches)		Trou aux Biches	*****
		Shandrani	*****
		Le Touessrok	*****
		Le Saint Geran	*****
		Le Royal Palm	*****
		Imperial	*****
		Le Paradis	*****
		Belle Mare Plage Hotel	*****
		Ambre	*****
		Le Canonnier	***
		Le Brabant	**
		Le Klondike	**
		La Croix du Sud	**
		La Veranda	**
		Veranda Bungalow Village	**
		Surcouf	**
		Moonlight Bay Hotel	**
		Villa Caroline Beach	*
		<b>REUNION</b>	
		Grand Hotel des Mascareignes	*****
		Maharani	*****
		Novotel Coralia	*****
		Blue Beach	***
		Les Aigrettes	***
		Coralia	***
		L'Archipel	***
		Récif	**
		<b>THE COMORES</b>	
		<b>GALAWA</b>	*****

Source: Results of the Erasmus Report, LUC, 1993. (Tour operators Jet Tours, Odysseus, Uniclarm 2000).

#### 4. A tourism development strategy based on sustainable tourism

According to Quinn (in Mintzberg & Quinn, 1991:5) a strategy is a pattern or plan that integrates an organization's major goals, policies and action sequences into a cohesive whole. A well-formulated strategy helps to marshal and allocate an organization's resources in a unique and viable posture based on its relative internal competencies and shortcomings, anticipated changes in the environment and contingent moves by intelligent opponents.

Mintzberg (in Mintzberg & Quinn, 1991:70-82) divides the families of strategies widely represented in organizations in general, in five groups: 'locating', 'distinguishing', 'elaborating', 'extending' and 'reconceiving' the business core. Taking into account the case of the Seychelles, 'distinguishing', 'elaborating' and 'extending' strategies are very important. The *distinguishing strategies* for the Seychelles concern a 'price differentiation' strategy, a 'support differentiation' strategy ("to differentiate on the basis of something that goes alongside the product") and a 'segmentation' strategy ("targeting carefully only certain segments"). Mintzberg based his *elaborating strategies* mainly on Ansoff's strategic options. For the Seychelles 'penetration' strategies (trying to expand sales with no fundamental change in product or market), 'market development' strategies (promoting existing products in new markets) and 'product development' strategies (offering new or modified products on the same basic market) are necessary. In the case of the Seychelles the *extending strategies* of Mintzberg can be limited to the 'diversification' strategies (developing new products for new markets).

It is possible to concentrate on one of the above strategies, but the situation in the Seychelles needs more than one strategy in order to be competitive to other destinations. The number of tourism products and the main regions from which tourists are coming are too limited to make tourism a strong sector.

The Seychelles Government has already formulated its prime objective in accordance with sustainable tourism and to the strategic analysis of the Seychelles as a tourist destination. The emphasis is on maximising long term net foreign exchange from tourism by increasing the quality of the services with respect to the local people and the natural environment.

From the prime objective, and by taking into account the strategic analysis, we can derive seven sub-objectives:

- (1) diversification of the economy with tourism as the main source of income;
- (2) improving the seasonal spread of tourism in time and by region;
- (3) promoting quality tourism;
- (4) promoting ecotourism;
- (5) upgrading of professionalism;
- (6) setting up a network of tourism organizations on different levels;
- (7) developing the tourism product towards a competitive one.

Taking into account the seven derived goals we will consider the following *action sequences* necessary to reach the goals.

*Diversification of the economy* with tourism as the main income sector is possible by expanding all three economic sectors equally. Some activities in these sectors can be linked to tourism (e.g. the souvenir industry and handicrafts, agriculture with food industry) in that they will reduce the imports. Others must be independent of this (sometimes) vulnerable sector or must have markets for the local people as well as for the tourist.

*Improving the seasonal spread of tourism in time and by region* can be realised by a price differentiation in relation to the climate. For example lower prices in the rain season and higher prices in the dry season from June until October. Nowadays, the most expensive month with most tourist arrivals is December (cf. *table 14*) which, at the same time, is the wettest month. In spite of this, it is quit normal to demand high prices because of the law of demand and supply. People from the 'North' flee their country for a Christmas in the sun. At the same time it will be a missed opportunity if these tourists will be disappointed because of bad weather. They will not come again and worse they will make negative publicity for a Christmas holiday on Seychelles. Other actions for this seasonal spread are segmentation according to activities. For example some seasons are more suitable for windsurfing, sunbathing and the like, than other seasons. It is also recommended to differentiate between the type of accommodation (e.g. bed and breakfast run by local people). Attracting tourists from other continents and from other professional classes will be important to improve the seasonal spread by region. For example more emphasis could be put on tourists, who are interested in small projects led by local people rather

than paying attention to rich tourists who have money to spend, but who do not necessarily show more respect for the people and the local environment.

*Promoting quality tourism* is possible by developing more quality tourism products, such as eco-tourism and health and spa resorts, and by improving some quality aspects like the reception techniques and the motivation of the staff; the quality of the accommodations, not in the sense of offering more luxury, but by providing, for example, mosquito nets, showers with hot and cold water, clean rooms, potable water; the availability of information (for example guide books); the planning of tourist projects; and the quality of tourist education and research.

To *promote eco-tourism* it is not only important to create more national parks and to acquire subsidies from the UNESCO, but also to educate the ecotourist before he goes on holiday. An eco-tourist is interested in the environment, but this does not mean that he respects it. Therefore it is obvious that the eco-tourists are informed about how they should behave in a vulnerable environment. To succeed in this initiative cooperation is necessary between the touroperations, the aviation agencies, the countries of departure and of destination. One can think about a brochure that is handed over to the tourists before the plane takes off. Another idea is showing a film about the vulnerable environment about the impact man already had on the environment in the world.

*Upgrading of professionalism* is possible by improving education and research. The Seychelles Government can allocate a part of the international tourism receipts to education and research. It is possible to set up courses in Western Europe, because most tourists come from there, but it is more important to take into consideration local habits when educating people to become guides. It is the tourist who has to adapt, not the local people.

*The setting up of tourism organizations on different levels*, for example a coordinated network of tourist information offices as well on the different islands as abroad, will help to give an idea of the tourism development on the various islands and the various accommodations.



Through *promotion and image building* the Seychelles can develop the tourism product towards a competitive one by showing that the Seychelles are more than a sun-sand-sea paradise destination. The Seychelles Government has already put some emphasis on other images, but it has to continue because most of the tourists still have this limited idea.

Table 14 : Monthly tourist arrivals in the Seychelles, 1981 - 1991 ('000)

	1981	% of total	1985	% of total	1989	% of total	1990	% of total	1991	% of total
Jan	5.4	8.9	5.5	7.6	6.4	7.4	8.6	8.3	7.0	7.8
Feb	6.7	11.1	6.3	8.7	7.4	8.6	11.0	10.6	5.6	6.2
Mar	6.9	11.4	7.5	10.3	8.5	9.9	8.3	8.0	8.2	9.1
Apr	5.5	9.1	5.9	8.1	7.2	8.4	9.4	9.1	7.6	8.4
May	4.5	7.4	5.3	7.3	5.8	6.7	7.3	7.0	6.2	6.9
Jun	3.4	5.6	5.0	6.9	5.6	6.5	6.6	6.4	6.8	7.5
Jul	4.8	7.9	6.0	8.3	7.0	8.1	8.5	8.2	7.8	8.6
Aug	6.3	10.4	6.9	9.5	7.8	9.0	8.8	8.5	8.3	9.2
Sep	3.8	6.2	5.5	7.6	7.3	8.5	8.5	8.2	7.6	8.4
Oct	4.8	7.9	5.3	7.3	8.5	9.9	8.9	8.6	8.0	8.9
Nov	4.1	6.8	5.8	8.0	7.0	8.1	8.4	8.1	7.5	8.3
Dec	4.2	7.0	7.5	10.3	7.6	8.8	9.5	9.2	9.5	10.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>60.4</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>72.5</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>86.1</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>103.8</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>90.1</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: The Economist Intelligence Unit, International Tourism Report, Seychelles, 1992: 69.

## 5. Conclusion

The Seychelles have chosen for quality tourism as a concept of a sustainable tourism development. To succeed they mainly attract the tourist who wants to pay a higher price for a qualitative product. The Seychelles have already started some actions to improve their product, like limitations to growth, improvements in the various tourist services and environmental policies. Through these policies a harmony can arise between the host people, the tourist and the environment, but it can be dangerous to attract only one segment of tourists. Especially in this case, it is not obvious that 'rich' tourists take into account the people and the nature. Educating the tourist and being strict on his behaviour during his stay is therefore very important. Nevertheless, improving the seasonal spread of tourism in time and by region, must be one of the main objectives to reach sustainable tourism, not to forget diversification of the economy with tourism as the main source of income, promoting quality tourism, promoting ecotourism, upgrading of professionalism, setting up a network of tourism organizations on different levels, and developing the tourism product towards a competitive one.

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