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The More the Merrier?

A Study of Sustainable Tourism Development in the Seychelles Islands

Bachelor’s Thesis in Tourism Studies

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Location of the Seychelles Islands

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ABSTRACT

‘The cost of doing nothing would be very high on the fragile national ecosystems and ultimately on the society of the Seychelles.’

Seychelles National Report 2012 p55

This Minor Field Study, undertaken as a Bachelor’s thesis, aims to research the Seychelles work with sustainable tourism development and its challenges. The study was conducted on site for two months in cooperation with the Seychelles Tourism Board. The national strategy for sustainable tourism development is intended to maintain the uniqueness of Seychelles. Seychelles has for over 30 years been a global leader in protecting biodiversity and natural environment and 51% of the total land area consists of conservation areas. On the other hand, Seychelles main source of income is tourism, with 40% of the inhabitants directly or indirectly depending on tourism. As one of our interviewees put it: “the more tourism, the merrier”. The country will get better infrastructure and more jobs because of it and how could that spoil the environment? This study looks into hotels perceptions of sustainable development in the tourism industry, their work with sustainable practices and thoughts concerning ecolabelling. Results show dissatisfaction with the government and that better environmental governance is needed. The recent rapid development of new hotels is becoming a rather problematic situation due to higher competition, infrastructural problems and lack of labour force. The interest in an eco label is high, although they believe it is complicated to implement and is perceived as expensive. On the other hand, hotels are more or less working in a sustainable way already.

Regardless of the sustainable tourism development initiative, our interviewees had a fear that Seychelles is becoming a mass tourism destination. They demand that this trend be stopped. We ask therefore, is more really merrier?

KEY WORDS: Sustainable tourism development, small island developing states (SIDS), qualitative research, eco label, eco-certification, mass tourism, planning, politics.
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION
1.1 Background: The Seychelles Islands  
1.1.1 Seychelles Tourism Board  
1.1.2 The Seychelles Sustainable Tourism Label  
1.2 Purpose of Study and Research Questions  
1.3 Focus and Limitations  

## 2.0 METHOD
2.1 Approach  
2.2 Reliability and Validity  
2.3 Qualitative Interview  
2.4 Data Processing  
2.5 Reflexive Critique  

## 3.0 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK
3.1 Tourism and Development  
3.1.1 Mass tourism  
3.1.2 Sustainable Tourism Development  
3.1.3 Mass tourism versus Alternative Tourism  
3.2 Planning Island Tourism  
3.2.1 Tourism Planning  
3.2.2 Eco-certifications and Environmental Governance  

## 4.0 RESULTS AND ANALYSIS
4.1 Sustainable Practices  
4.1.1 Sustainable Practices at SSTL-certified Hotels  
4.1.2 Sustainable Practices at Non-certified Hotels  
4.1.3 Comments on the Seychelles Sustainable Tourism Label  
4.2 Perceptions of Tourism Development in the Seychelles  
4.2.1 Tourism Development and Governance  
4.2.2 Competition  

## 5.0 CONCLUSION
5.1 Reflections  
5.2 Suggestions for Future Research  

## REFERENCES

Annex 1: Definitions  
Annex 2: Abbreviations  
Annex 3: Operational Accommodation Establishments in Seychelles 2013  
Annex 4: Ownership of Seychelles Tourism Accommodations  
Annex 5: Seychelles Sustainable Tourism Label Criteria (2013)  
Annex 6: Interview Questions
1.0 INTRODUCTION

Tourism is widely regarded as one of the largest industries in the world. In the Seychelles Islands tourist have arrived since 1959 and have since increased constantly. In recent years the number of new hotels has rapidly increased followed by a higher demand for tourists. The Seychelles is ranked as the 4th most tourism dependent country in the world and the travel and tourism industry represented 27.5% of Seychelles’ GDP in 2010 (seychelles.travel, 22042013). Of the approximately 87,000 inhabitants over 1,000 Seychellois tourism operators and approximately 11% of the Seychellois people directly depend on tourism for their living (seychelles.travel, 22042013). However, the combination of direct and indirect tourism-generated employment is estimated to account for in excess of 40% of the total national workforce (SS). The tourist arrivals from year 2000 show an increase from 130,000 arrivals to 208,000 in 2012 (STMP, 2012). Since Seychelles has experienced a rapid development of hotels in the last decade they are now facing several challenges. To mention a few, high competition due to overbuilding of hotels, which results in decreased room prices, increased costs of fuel and water shortage that heavily affects the dry seasons. The lack of labour force puts the industry to the largest employer of expatriate workers. Figures show that the expatriate workers has gone up from 6.6% from 2003 to 23.4% in 2010 of direct employment in the tourism sector. This development has consequences for sustainable tourism development and tourism planning in general.

Seychelles has for over 30 years been a leader in the work of protecting biodiversity and natural environment and 51% of the total land area is consists of conservation areas. In 2012 Seychelles Tourism Board launched an eco-certification called Seychelles Sustainable Tourism Label (SSTL). SSTL’s mission is to certify all accommodations and their vision is to eventually certify all different sectors in the tourism industry. The purpose of this certification program is to inspire more efficient and sustainable ways of doing business. By receiving a Minor Field Study scholarship from Sida, we were committed to benefit the country. The aim was to find risks and threats to the Seychelles tourism industry. This study will therefore focus on the hotels perception of the tourism development and how they perform the sustainable development initiative in the Seychelles.

The disposition of the thesis is as follows: We begin the background by introducing the Seychelles Islands, the tourism development and their work with sustainable tourism development. We finish with purpose of study, research questions and focus and limitations. In the method chapter we describe how the study was executed. The method is divided into approach, reliability and validity, qualitative interview, data processing and reflexive criticism. In the theoretical framework chapter, we make use of two approaches: ‘tourism and development’ and ‘planning island tourism’. The first part consists of mass tourism, sustainable tourism development and mass tourism versus alternative tourism. The second part consists of tourism planning and eco-certifications and governance. The results and analysis chapter is thereafter reported in a continuous interpretive text, interspersed with interview sequences. The first part consists of results from sustainable practices in hotels and comments on SSTL. The second part consists of perceptions of tourism development in the Seychelles. We conclude the study by summarizing our findings and answering our study questions. We also make suggestions for future research. Words marked in bold can be found in definitions, Annex 1 pp44-45 and abbreviations in Annex 2 p46.
1.1 BACKGROUND: THE SEYCHELLES ISLANDS

The Seychelles Islands (shortened Seychelles), marketed under the phrase ‘another world’, is an archipelago of 115 islands situated east of mainland Africa and northeast of Madagascar in the Indian Ocean (see Figure 1). The total land area occupies 455 km² and was first settled in 1771 by the French. It was later ceded to Britain, but became independent in 1976 (seychelles.travel, 07032013). Seychelles is generally known as a destination with respect to environmental quality, political stability, safety and security. The country has a democracy with presidential and parliamentary elections held every five years (STMP, 2012). It is also recognized as an important biodiversity area of the world, especially for its unique forests and bird species. With regard to conservation, there have been many establishments of extensive nature reserves and marine parks and today these covers 51 % of the land area. Included in the conservation work, the Aldabra atoll and Vallée de Mai Nature Reserve was designated as UNESCO World Heritages, spearfishing was outlawed and the killing of green turtles was banned. This, along with other environmental legislation, established an international reputation for conservation on the islands (SNR, 2012). Seychelles aspires to be a global leader in sustainable development. Sustainable development is not new for Seychelles; in fact, it was one of the initial signatories to the three Rio global environmental conventions and has been instrumental in driving sustainable development at a national and international level. The 1990-1994 National Development Plan (NDP) and the Environmental Management Plan of Seychelles 1990-2000 (EMPS), constituted what the state called ‘a single and integrated national strategy for achieving sustainable development by the end of the decade and century’. By 1999, civil society organizations had already been involved in environmental issues, including that of sustainable development (SSDS, 2012).

The climate, the pristine beaches and marine life have attracted visitors since 1959 and once the international airport opened in 1971, the construction boom sparked off. A number of hotels were built along the edge of the coastal plateau. The land owners made a profit by selling their estates, but due to government legislation hotels were not allowed to be too close to the beach or be higher than two to three storey buildings (the height of surrounding palm trees) (Stabler M.J, 1997). Since the independence in 1976, Seychelles has developed from an agrarian-based economy into one based upon tourism and fisheries (SNR, 2012). In regards to tourism the Seychelles has, even though it is politically incorrect to use the term, focused on up-market tourism (Stabler M.J, 1997). The current tourism markets are France, Italy, Germany, UK and Ireland (STMP, 2012).

Mahé, Praslin and La Digue, the three most inhabited islands, are the islands participating in our study. Mahé is the main island of Seychelles, where we find the international airport and the capital city of Victoria. 90 % of Seychelles population and all economic activities are located on the narrow coastal plateau. Mahé has various tourism sites, diving centres, restaurants, bars, pristine beaches, shops, nature reserves, public transport, taxis and car hires. Mahé has a great selection of accommodations and accounts for 46 % of the overall bed supply in Seychelles (SNR, 2012). Large parts of the east coast are man made because of the lack of buildable land. One example is Eden Island, a luxurious resort with apartments and yachts. 60 % of the approved hotels that are planned to be built before 2020 will be constructed on Mahé (STMP, 2012). Praslin, the second largest island, can be reached by a one-hour boat ride or a 15 minute-flight from Mahé. Praslin hosts the UNESCO World Heritage site: Vallée de Mai. In this ancient
forest of palm trees the Coco-de-Mer palm tree is found. This palm tree produces fruits that are nature’s exact replica of the female pelvis. Vallé de Mai is also home for one of the world’s rarest birds, the Seychelles Black Parrot. Here tourists find various accommodations, restaurants and the widely known beach Anse Lazio (seychelles.travel, 22042013). Praslin accounts for 26 % of the total bed supply in Seychelles. The small island La Digue, is situated a 15 minute boat ride from Praslin. The island has several pristine beaches and the national park Anse Source D’Argent. Here, bicycles and oxcart are the main transports. The island is under a significant environmental stress, not least the island’s capacity to absorb solid waste and water management. In the year 2000, the total amount of beds was 364 on La Digue. Despite attempts to control the construction of new hotels, the number of hotels continued to increase and reached 752 beds in 2013. La Digue accounts for 9 % of the total bed supply in Seychelles (STMP, 2012).

The total number of operational accommodation establishments in the Seychelles is 423 (8,574 beds), as of March 13th 2013 (see Annex 3 p47) (Hollanda, 18032013). Most of the accommodations are situated on Mahé, Praslin and La Digue, but are to be found in 16 of the 115 islands. In 2003 the project Tourism Incentive Act aimed to attract private investments and targeted high standard projects, including five star hotels to enhance the marketing image of Seychelles as an exclusive and high standard destination (STMP, 2012). As seen in Annex 4 p48, 11 (782 beds) of the large hotels are 100 % Seychellois owned and 13 (2,124 beds) of the large hotels are 100 % foreign owned. Seychellois owns most of the small hotels, self-caterings and guesthouses. Between 2003 and 2011 Seychelles had an increase of 3,104 beds. Nevertheless, data shows that between 2000 and 2010 the average bed occupancy in Seychelles remained at 57 %. If the registered approvals of new hotels in 2011 would be built by 2020 the total will be 15,000 beds, according to STMP (2012). This means an increase of 80 % in bed supply from 2011. These projects do not include guesthouses, self-caterings or any increases in beds in already established hotels (STMP, 2012).

1.1.1 Seychelles Tourism Board

Seychelles Tourism Board (STB) is a public/private sector body, which is responsible for Seychelles' national tourism policy, promotion of the destination, study, product development, monitoring of standards and coordination of the tourism offices (seychelles.travel, 22042013). In 2011 STB presented the Seychelles Tourism Master Plan (STMP) for the years 2012 to 2020.

Seychelles Tourism Master Plan 2012-2020: Vision

‘Tourism in Seychelles shall continue to be developed to the highest standards to achieve the optimum social and economic benefit for the Seychellois people. This while reaffirming and further rooting the commitment to sustainable, responsible and ethical tourism at each step of the supply chain with the balanced objectives of economic empowerment, cultural and environmental conservation/protection and socio-cultural integration’.

According to the STMP, there are certain risks with tourist arrivals, for example 1) consumption is carried out on site and 2) the clientele is fickle. It is also connected to the economic risk with bed oversupply. The increase of beds in the Seychelles could, with insufficient tourist arrivals,
result in decreased bed occupancy, higher domestic competition, reduction of room prices and lower growth in the economic turnover. Seychelles tourism accommodations are heterogeneous. Those who will display higher resilience capacity are those who can offer diversified services, and who are more adjustable to price reduction. This will affect the small tourism accommodation negatively as they are more vulnerable to the effect of bed oversupply than larger hotels. It is well understood that if not controlled, the impacts of tourism development will gradually destroy the environment. The industry relies on the environment as a promoter. When visitor use rises, it sometimes surpasses the limit of the environments ability to cope with this new level of use. With the desired increase number of tourism arrivals in Seychelles, STMP face the challenge with the conservation of the environment and its sites due to overcrowding. To highlight one of the missions in the plan: to diversify Seychelles’ tourism market sources and to gradually increase visitor arrivals while adopting a balanced approach for tourism bed supply, airplane seat supply and visitor arrival targets. According to STB, Seychelles is investigating the carrying capacity of all the developed islands. The concept of carrying capacity has been applied in the examination of political and administrative ability to absorb tourism already in 1977. Until the carrying capacity is completed, the limit of the amount of tourists cannot exceed the number of inhabitants of 87,000 at any one time (STB, 2013). Another limit is that there cannot be more tourists than there are available beds in the accommodations (Hollanda, 18032013).

1.1.2 The Seychelles Sustainable Tourism Label

Seychelles Sustainable Tourism Label (SSTL) is a sustainable tourism management and certification program specially designed for Seychelles. The purpose of the label is to provide a set of standards to guide sustainability work and improvements in the tourism industry. The concept was first proposed in Seychelles 2004 by the Ministry of Environment together with the government, in their preparation of Vision 21, Tourism Development in Seychelles (2001-2010). Later, the Seychelles Ministry of Tourism through STB adopted the concept. In June 2012 the label was officially launched and by September 2012, three hotels had joined the label. SSTL’s vision is that every hotel enterprise in Seychelles integrates sustainability practices in its business operations. A sustainable business is defined as one that uses its resources today in such a way that the business can continue to be productive in the future. The aim of SSTL is to safeguard Seychelles for tomorrow. The criteria to follow in the process of becoming certified with a sustainable tourism label, includes restrictions regarding principal points of: management, waste, water, energy, staff, conservation, community and guests (see Annex 5 p49 for complete criteria). The mission of SSTL is to encourage all hotels in Seychelles to mainstream sustainability practices into their business operations to safeguard the biodiversity and culture of Seychelles (seychelles.travel, 12092012). The application fee of the label varies from €400 to €1000 depending on the size of the establishment. If the label becomes successful in the hotel industry, STB is aiming to implement the label to other parts of the tourism industry (Hollanda, 18032013).

Seychelles is a very interesting country to study, not only for the challenges it is facing as an archipelago but also in terms of the risk of over development in the tourism sector that eventually could turn the country into a mass tourism destination. By implementing SSTL, STB hope that every hotel enterprise in Seychelles integrates sustainability practices in their business
operations. This study will therefore focus on the hotels perception of the tourism development and how they perform the sustainable development initiative in the Seychelles. We also aim to find out how hotels experience the governance within the tourism industry. Are the hotels positive or negative to the development? Are they currently performing sustainable practices in their hotels?

1.2 Purpose of Study and Research Questions

In this Bachelor’s thesis we have initially been asked by the Seychelles Tourism Board to find risks and threats to the Seychelles tourism industry and their work with sustainable tourism development. The purpose of this study is to find out how hotels perceive the tourism development and perform the sustainable development initiative in the Seychelles. The study is also a way for us to obtain a deeper understanding of the Seychelles tourism industry.

More specifically, the issues this study tries to address are:

1. Which major issues underlie the work on sustainable tourism development in Seychelles?
2. How do hotels perceive the tourism development in Seychelles?

1.3 Focus and Limitations

Tourism contributes to pollution of atmosphere, oceans and freshwater. Climate change and its links to tourism have been examined intensively over the past six years and the industry makes unrealistic claims over emissions reductions, carbon offsets and carbon neutrality. Tourist travel continues to grow nevertheless, because of individual desires, economic and political factors (Buckley, 2012). In this study we focus on the local impacts and the tourism development in the Seychelles. Sustainable tourism development is a wide subject and includes many more theories and concepts, for example; modernization, development theory and post-development theory, symbolic interactionism, carbon offsets etc. In terms of development and decision-making in planning, environmental governance is a suggested concept that has several different forms, but we will not go further into those forms. We have chosen to focus on the hotels perspective, impacts and development and perception of the industry in terms sustainable tourism development.
2.0 METHOD

The purpose of this Minor Field Study, undertaken as a Bachelor’s thesis, was to answer an optional research question in the field of Tourism Studies. The research data collection was conducted in the Seychelles during eight weeks between March and May 2013. Before the arrival we obtained prior knowledge about the country and sustainable tourism development. Once in place, we spoke with locals, tourism officials and business professionals in the field of tourism. This was to get a better understanding of the tourism industry. Our first idea was to conduct a study including hotels, airlines, tour-operators and Ministers of Environment and Tourism. They are all key-role players in the decision-making of development of tourism in the Seychelles. After discussion with our supervisor we shifted our study focus to hotels only, since STB only focused on certifying hotels. The aim was to include the three current SSTL-certified hotels, one small (up to 25 rooms) and one larger (more than 25 rooms) hotel in the three most developed islands: Mahé, Praslin and La Digue. This concluded in a total of nine qualitative interviews with three certified, three small and three large hotels. The reason we included certified hotels in our study was to obtain information and insight of sustainable practices, pros and cons of being certified, and get feedback from obtaining the eco-certification. This information also benefitted STB. By interviewing the non-certified hotels we gained an understanding of how they worked with sustainability. Hotels which are partly or foreign owned may have access to greater capital and thereby an easier task to invest in sustainable practices and eco-certifications. We therefore chose to focus on Seychellois owned hotels in this study.

2.1 Approach

The thesis has an abductive approach, as it switched between results and theories depending on the result of the interviews (Veal, 2011). Our abductive approach is also combined with inductive and deductive influences. Inductive, since the purpose was to explore the topic with interviews at a preliminary stage to later create the theory of the perceived result. Deductive because we researched the underlying facts of Seychelles tourism and development and gathered as much material as possible to obtain a wider knowledge. The study has a phenomenological and hermeneutic approach, where we have insofar aimed for understanding the situation by observing and interviewing without preconceived ideas. A theoretical interpretation can in some cases prevent the researcher to see new, previously unrecognized aspects if the phenomena that are investigated beforehand. It is therefore difficult to avoid complete theoretical bias. Although, one way is to bring the analytical issues that form the basis of an interpretation explicit and consistent with a hermeneutic approach, i.e. that is a careful consideration of our assumptions regarding the research topic (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).
2.2 Reliability and Validity

Reliability refers to research findings consistency: it is often treated in relation to the issue if the result can be replicated at other times and by other researchers. It is about whether the interviewees will change their answers during an interview and whether they will give different answers to different interviewers. In a qualitative interview, it is difficult to talk about reliability, since each interviewer works in their own way and come with various supplementary questions, for example (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Validity (accuracy), on the other hand, investigates if a method examines what it claimed to examine, in the extent that our observations indeed reflect the researched phenomena. In qualitative research, the process and the processing of data are essential for the validity to be high. Among other things, the validity of a study is dependent on how well substantiated its theoretical assumptions are and how logical derivation is from theory to research questions. The interview questions must be carefully designed, to be appropriate and ethical. The treatment of the material must be carefully handled as well. It is very important to be critical in the analysis of the material to avoid biased interpretations. A common criticism of research interviews is that the result is invalid because the interviewees' statements may be false. This is a risk that needs to be checked in each case, however, this is very difficult to verify or to establish (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

2.3 Qualitative Interview

The qualitative method aim to achieve a deeper understanding in the situation, not to generalise or find the truth. To answer our study questions, we chose to make use of in-depth interviews. In-depth interviews are suitable when the information from the different subjects is expected to vary considerably. The benefits with interviews are that they give primary data, which in our case is important and gives the study high validity. The semi-structured interviews are also flexible to changes and easy to adapt to different respondents. Furthermore, it is easy to add follow-up questions, although it is important to point out that by adding follow-up questions one can jeopardize the validity of the respondent’s answers. Our interviews were semi-structured and divided into different topics with predetermined questions (see Annex 6 p50-51 for interview questions). Questions were constructed based on predetermined knowledge of the Seychelles tourism industry. Using a semi-structured questionnaire made it easier for us to analyse the answers than with an unstructured checklist. As authors coming from another country and culture we were aware of the challenges. Cultural boundaries and language difficulties was sometimes an issue as neither parts have English as mother tongue. Neither do we speak Creole, the Seychellois mother tongue. Even if previous research has been conducted it is still a challenge to gather all the knowledge of the cultural facts that could affect the relationship between the interviewer and interviewee and also the overall situation of the hotel industry in Seychelles (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). We have to keep in mind that by cooperating with SSTL could mean that the interviewees were not completely truthful in their answers, or avoided certain topics. Having a well-known local organisation behind us could on the other hand also have been perceived in a positive way by being given more respect, for example. A qualitative research requires a lot of time, not only for interviews, but also for transcribing the gathered material. We were well aware of the challenge we faced as beginners in the qualitative research field. Standard
critiques against qualitative interviews are that the interviewees’ answers are rather common sense than scientific. The interview is not reliable instead distorted, the study is subjective as different readers have different interpretation and find different meanings, not valid as it creates from subjective impressions and not generalizable because of the few interviewees (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

To be easier to process, the interview questions were divided into themes. Themes for the certified hotels were certification, tourism market, dependency on tourism and sustainability practices. Likewise, the non-certified hotels questions were divided into; the tourism market, dependency on tourism and sustainability practices. The questionnaires was corrected and approved by our supervisor at Karlstad University and our local supervisor at SSTL in the Seychelles. We conducted a test run of the questions to make sure we managed duration, recording and had the correct order of questions. This gives the research a higher validity. Even though the process has been thoroughly planned, it is impossible to say that this kind of research has a high reliability. The reason is that, even though another researcher has the same questions and perform the interviews under the same conditions, other things may affect the interviewee and thus answer the questions differently (such as place, time, behaviour of the interviewer etc.).

The interviews were scheduled between April 1st and April 20th 2013. After our selection of hotels, by island and size, we were assisted by SSTL that chose and arranged our interviews. To ensure their anonymity, we exclude island, name of establishment, gender and working position of the interviewees in the result and coding. After approval, the interviews were recorded and deleted after transcription. The interviews were conducted at each establishment. We encouraged the interviewee to show us around their establishment to get an overview. To be able to get honesty, avoid interruption and be able to get good quality while recording, we asked the interviewees for a secluded room. Both of us participated in all nine interviews. We explained the purpose of the study before conducting the interviews. The interviewees were informed that we were not sent by STB but in cooperation with them while working on our thesis. We welcomed follow-up questions and we gave the interviewees a chance to add supplemental information in the end of the interview.

2.4 Data Processing

To remember as many impressions as possible, we strived to transcribe the same day as the interview was conducted. All together the interviews contained approximately seven hours of recordings, and took approximately 31 hours to transcribe. After each transcribed interview, we made a summary report based on key themes and divided the comments. The themes were: mass tourism, growth, government, dependency, competition, labour force, sustainable practices and label comments. The themes that appeared in the transcribed material were classified on the basis of an active search for evidence in the interviews. The thematic approaches in the theoretical framework were therefore based on inductive conclusions. After the first narrowing of the transcribed material we, once again, went through the material to find the most interesting quotes and divided them into positive and negative comments. We verified that all interviewees were quoted to make sure that the validity stayed high. To ensure that we did not draw a quick conclusion of the interview process, it was important to be open and sensitive to the many nuances of what the interviewees said. We approached the material in a deliberately eclectic way,
and drew out various concepts and theories. We had the presentation of the results in mind during the study, and in some forms, result and analysis melt together, e.g. in narrative analysis. The analysis is therefore a reconstruction of the many stories told by the various interviewees to create a richer, more dense and cohesive story than the stories that are scattered in the individual interviews. Throughout the study we have tried to maintain a creative dialogue between the material and the different theories, not in an effort to build a preconceived opinion, but simply to understand the problem in their social context, as our interviewees perceive them. The results and analysis was then presented as follows: sustainable practices at both SSTL-certified and non-certified hotels, comments on the Seychelles Sustainable Tourism Label, tourism development and governance, labour force and competition. A theoretical interpretation of interview texts can draw in new contexts for reflection on the interview themes and new dimensions of known phenomena. But a theoretical interpretation can also lead to distortions where the readers only notice the aspects of the phenomena that can be seen through the theoretical lenses (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). To conclude: results and analysis are reported in a continuous interpretive text, interspersed with interview sequences. The thesis finishes with a conclusion and suggestions for future studies.

2.5 Reflexive Critique

As a result of being a broad subject, many academics have put efforts in studying sustainable tourism development. In this thesis we have chosen to put more focus on Wahab & Pigram’s *Tourism, Development and Growth - The Challenge of Sustainability* from 1997 and Sharpley’s *Tourism Development and the Environment: Beyond Sustainability?* from 2009. We want to point out that Wahab & Pigram’s book is from 1997 and that all of its content might not be up to date. We are aware that our study is limited to a few voices within the broad subject. To avoid theoretical bias we have tried to complement the used theories with other academic voices as well. We are also using secondary data from several reports compiled by the STB and we must therefore trust that the statistics are reliable.

Many of the theories points towards the importance of working with sustainable tourism, which is why we included Sharpley (2009) who brings forward critiques of the concept. Gössling is one author that has focused on sustainability and the impacts in Seychelles with studies of carbon offsets and ecological footprints. With an uncontrolled increase of tourism the marine life and the fragile nature will be negatively affected and it is therefore a reason why regulations regarding new hotels are put in place in the Seychelles. This development could lead to mass tourism, according to Gössling (2000). In terms of sustainable tourism there is a theory that says that the travel to a destination should be included in the overall impacts of tourism. In the Seychelles, most of the energy consumption was used while travelling by air to the destination, more than the usage while in Seychelles (Hall, 2007). However, in this study we only discuss the tourism impacts at the destination, the travels to the destination is not included.
3.0 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this chapter, we make use of two theoretical approaches: ‘tourism and development’ and ‘planning island tourism’. ‘Tourism and development’ also contains of mass tourism, sustainable tourism development and mass tourism versus alternative tourism. ‘Planning island tourism’ also contains of tourism planning and eco-certifications and governance. Both strive to find the answer to the question: Which major issues underlie the work on sustainable tourism development in the Seychelles? The thematic approaches are issues based on inductive conclusions.

3.1 TOURISM AND DEVELOPMENT

Tourism has witnessed an enormous growth globally in the last century; in 1950 the total worldwide national tourist arrivals was 25 million people. In 2013 it surpassed the 1 billion mark (UNWTO, 17052013). Even though the global recession and dramatic increases in the price of oil, the trends indicate an increase in international tourist arrivals. The global economic contribution of tourism has also showed tremendous growth. In 1950 total international tourist receipts amounted US$2.1 billion and by 2007 it reached US$856 billion. If current forecasts are correct, this figure could rise to US$2 trillion by 2020, along with an increase in international arrivals to 1.6 billion. Choosing tourism as a development option is therefore seen to be safe. The fast growth and spread of tourism around the world has resulted in a common addition into countries local and national development policies and plans. In our case, tourism in the Seychelles already plays a major role and has become the first choice for development. Nevertheless, it is difficult to find any other economic sector than tourism that has attracted more concern and criticism. There has long been a tourism development impasse. Tourism certainly represents a potentially valuable, effective and, in for example Small Island Developing States (SIDS), the only viable incentive of economic and social development. More exactly, tourism has long been considered a valuable source of income, foreign exchange and employment, and therefore an efficient method of moving wealth from richer to poorer. However, tourism depends upon attractive physical and socio-cultural environments, but it also has the potential to damage or destroy it, if not handled correctly. The impasse facing tourism destinations is how to achieve a balance between the possible contributions of tourism and its negative consequences or how to manage the development of tourism. Although more so since the risk of Seychelles becoming a mass tourism destination is quite high. Certain forms of tourism, such as small-scale, community-based, ‘non-consumptive’ tourism, may have somewhat reduced impact on the local environment. Equally can large-scale tourism development, or development that result in substantial exploitation or variations to natural environments. The development of, for example, large-scale hotels may create major effects and permanent environmental consequences. Directly, through its permanent reformation of the environment and damage to vegetation and wildlife related to tourist activities and indirectly, through unnecessary demand of water in this type of establishments. Although, it must be said that not all large-scale tourism developments are environmentally damaging, conversely small-scale tourism developments may cause high environmental costs (Sharpley, 2009). ‘The more established a destination resort is, the more likely it is that concern about the environmental consequences of tourism will be less
in evidence than in newer, emerging destinations' (Sharpley, 2009, p131). This mean that the established resorts might think that the ‘harm has already been done’ and that the main effort of environmental management should be on ‘operational’ matters. For example, decreasing pollution and waste production or undertaking reconstruction work to damaged resources. In developing destinations, on the other hand, the opportunity still exists to manage or control development and, therefore, the extent to which the environment is exploited. No general consumptions can be made about the nature of the tourism-environment relationship in the setting of the features of tourism development; it is likely to differ on a case-to-case basis. Nevertheless, the rapid growth of tourism has given a lot of attention to potentially negative consequences on destination environments and societies. The fast and unplanned development of, for example, resorts on the Spanish coasts, initially led to calls for restraint in its development. Later on, the focus turned to more specific environmental, political, socio-cultural and economic consequences of tourism development and a lot of criticism was directed towards the phenomenon of mass tourism (Sharpley, 2009).

3.1.1 Mass tourism

According to Wahab and Pigram (1997), mass tourism is a notion used every day, but what does it mean? Many academics have created their own definition, which means that mass tourism have basic elements included in it, but there is no practical definition that can be applied to all destinations. Nevertheless, it can be said that mass tourism takes place in a country in a specific period and very often it is related to a massive tourism project. The basic elements of mass tourism are:

- Participation of large number of people in tourism, whatever the tourist activity may be;
- The holiday is mainly standardized, rigidly packed and inflexible

Common denominators, for the tourism industry, are that holidays become more standardized, less costly because it is cheaper to operate such destinations and fewer overnight stays because of faster and cheaper ways of travel. International tourist arrivals have the possibility of contributing to economic growth by earning foreign exchange. The two basic elements are tourism expenditure and tourism investment, which are the bases for two key benefits: income and employment. Each economic activity yields returns to the public sector in the form of direct taxes, value-added tax (VAT), company taxes, and social security taxes etc. Tourism cannot exist as an independent sector in any society and therefore does it also induce social costs and benefits (Wahab & Pigram, 1997).

The benefits of tourism are many, but the costs of mass tourism are also very important to take notice of. If all transfers and imports to the country are eliminated, then all leakages are taken into account and the tourism multiplier effect is low. However, locals might change their purchasing consumption due to a demonstration effect of tourists (e.g. purchase of imported products instead of local) (Wahab & Pigram, 1997). Dielemans (2008) addresses in her book *Välkommen till Paradiset* (English: *Welcome to Paradise*), some of today's most popular tourist areas, such as Thailand, the Canary Islands and the Dominican Republic and the problems caused by mass tourism. Dielemans brings forth, among others, the problems with prostitution and child labour due to low wages. The countries' dependence on cheaper foreign labour to run the
tourism business is also mentioned. In the Canary Islands, and many other mass tourism destinations, it has gone so far as to residents selling food from other countries to satisfy the tourists’ needs. On the other hand, the western tourists want destinations to be as authentic as possible, and they pay well to see how people are still living without refrigerator and freezer. The problem is that the locals would not take part of the tourists’ money if they actually installed modernity and without money they will not survive. This is a very problematic paradox, since this says that tourism should not be developed, but still stay primitive (Dielemans, 2008).

Another important factor to consider is whether ‘tourism produces inflation’. A high inflow of tourists during a season can provoke a rise in prices of many goods and services in a tourist region. It is indisputable that in cities and tourist areas prices for products and services are higher, than in rural areas and places without tourism. This increase is presumably higher in poorer regions than in richer ones, because tourists are seen to able to afford the higher prices. Retailers increase their prices on existing goods and start to provide more expensive products. This means that locals have to pay more for their goods and retailers selling to tourists can afford to pay higher rents and taxes, which are passed on to the consumer. Another aspect is the price development of accommodation and other facilities. In the short term, supply is inelastic and an increase of mass tourism may lead to higher prices. A significant increase in demand is followed by price increases. It is also known that mass tourism leads to higher land prices. Growth of tourism creates demand for land, and competition from potential buyers forces the price of land to rise. The locals are forced to pay for their homes, while at the same time all existing owners (buildings, land, etc.) profit from additional value, but investments for locals becomes more difficult. Another problem is the demand of a destination moving from one destination to another. Even though this is a well-known phenomenon, especially in the Mediterranean countries, regions often forget that they are in competition with other regions and could easily lose the tourists if they are not performing long-term planning (Wahab & Pigram, 1997). Other (invisible) costs with mass tourism, as Mowforth & Munt (2003) mention, include environmental, social and cultural degradation, unequal distribution of financial benefits, the promotion of overprotective attitudes, and even spread of diseases. Many destinations have seen extensive changes in the environment and nature because of tourism, such as deforestation and soil erosion in the Himalayas, disturbance of wildlife by safari tours in Kenya, coastal erosions in Thailand etc. (Sharpley, 2009, Dielemans, 2008).

3.1.2 Sustainable Tourism Development

In the late 1980s an alternative form of tourism started emerging from the concept sustainable development. The aim of alternative tourism (e.g. ecotourism, responsible tourism, fair trade tourism, sustainable tourism etc.) was to be the ‘good’ side of tourism as oppose to mass tourism. The dichotomy between ‘good’ alternative tourism and ‘bad’ mass tourism underlines many of the typical principles of sustainable tourism development (Sharpley, 2009). Sustainable development is governed by a set of principles developed through several decades of global discourse and research (SSDS, 2012). Sustainable development includes reducing poverty, awareness of the impacts world population growth have on the limited resources, achieve increased participation amongst stakeholders as upholding appropriate policy decisions. As well as governance respect to resource exploitation and allocation, development (in general), manage
the prevention of disasters including both human made and natural disasters. By applying sustainable development to tourism, one can find many definitions, but we choose to mention the earliest; the Brundtland report from 1987, which says the following: ‘development which meets the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunity for the future’. Sustainable tourism development is only one part of the sustainable development agenda. Additionally, we bring forward the broader perspective of sustainable tourism development that was adopted at the Globe '90 Conference in Canada 1990: ‘those who insert the word “tourism” between ‘sustainable’ and ‘development’ should ensure that, under all circumstances, the resultant principles of sustainable tourism development are also principles of sustainable development’ (Sharpley, 2009).

A broader analysis of sustainable tourism development as a process is well beyond the scope of this thesis, but following are the principles of sustainable tourism development:

- Minimizing environmental impacts: Meaning that tourism should consider both local and global environment impacts.
- Achieving conservation outcomes: Support of conservation of natural areas and minimize damage to them and the wildlife.
- Being different: One of the keys to successful and sustainable tourism is achieving a clear sense of difference from other competing destinations.
- Achieving authenticity: Aim for local history, culture, natural lifestyle and natural resources.
- Reflecting community values: Means to represent the past, present and future aspiration of the local community in a living and dynamic way.
- Understanding and targeting the market: Understanding board market trends and the needs and expectations of specific segments is critical.
- Increase the experience: Means gathering of attributes to enhance the appeal and the likelihood of the place visited.
- Adding value: To offer a richer tourism experience.
- Having good content: Telling the story and help conserve the destination.
- Enhancing sense of place through design: Means good design that respects the resources strives to conserve the environment and reflects community values.
- Providing mutual benefits to visitors and hosts: Both participants should meet the benefits that they seek in this development tool of the economy and community.
- Building local capacity: Means that good tourism business get involved with the community and collaborate with other businesses and stakeholders and help to build local capacity (Sharpley, 2009).

Because of the many dimensions included in the concept sustainable tourism development, these principles can be contradictory. The concept sustainable tourism development has drawn many critiques, and we will here mention a few of them. Firstly, the term ‘sustainable tourism development’ is broadly and variously defined, and despite the amount of academic attention paid to the topic, the failure to reach definitional consensus is seen by many as proof of the in-built irregularity of the concept (Buckley, 2012, Sharpley, 2009). Secondly, sustainable development language or ‘eco-speak’ may be used to camouflage unsustainable activities through what is referred to as ‘greenwashing’. As a result of greenwashing, tourists may feel that their environmental ‘guilt’ is somehow eased, because they join eco tours instead of ‘regular’ trips.
Thirdly, the oxymoronic character of the concept ‘sustainable development’ creates delusions, meaning that keeping something sustained and at the same time developing it is working against each other. Fourthly, the main problem of tourism may not lie in the mismanagement of resources; instead it might be a deeper issue in the system of society. People are encouraged to travel in greater numbers and more often than ever before. Therefore, the solution is seen to be the improvement of people’s day-to-day social well being, and thereby reducing their needs to ‘flee’ from their lives for short periods of time. This would, of course, threaten the economic lifeline so many societies depend on, since they have very few alternative developmental opportunities (Sharpley, 2009).

Mowforth & Munt (2003) also discuss the possibility of sustainable tourism development being used as an excuse for the expansion of tourism. They believe that the growth of sustainable tourism has become more as the ‘natural’ continuation of the historical inequalities between First World and Third World countries. Much of what are now seen as new forms of tourism have arisen because ‘the mainstream tourism industry has in fact merely tried to invent a new legitimation for itself – the ‘sustainable’ and ‘rational’ use of the environment, including the preservation of nature as an amenity for the already advantaged’ (Mowforth & Munt, 2003 p91). The sustainability framework is too complex to compare with tourism research. One single measure of sustainability in tourism remains elusive because of the difficulties in definitions, what to include, accounting and comparing different impacts (Buckley, 2012). A further problem is that despite a global consensus on sustainable development, its translation into practice has not been straightforward (SSDS, 2012). Despite these uncertainties it is clear that mainstream tourism and the human economy is far from sustainable (Buckley, 2012).

### 3.1.3 Mass tourism versus Alternative Tourism

After the brief explanation of the concepts of mass tourism and sustainable tourism development, we want to bring forward Shapley’s (2009) chart (see Table 1 for summary). Here, Sharpley compare the characteristics of mass tourism and alternative forms of tourism (e.g. sustainable tourism development). The ‘mass tourism’ side reflects characteristics, which are, among others, inconsiderate, uncontrolled with rapid development and the tourists have fixed programmes and are passive. Outsiders fund much of the development and the employees are imported for the construction. Conversely, ‘alternative tourism’ show, among others, considerate, controlled and slow development and the tourists make spontaneous decisions and are active as well as the employees and developers are local.
### Table 1. Summary of attributes of mass and alternative tourism (Source: Sharples, 2009, p44)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>MASS TOURISM</strong></th>
<th><strong>ALTERNATIVE TOURISM</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>General features</strong></td>
<td><strong>General features</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rapid development</td>
<td>Slow development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximizes (development)</td>
<td>Optimizes (development)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socially inconsiderate</td>
<td>Socially considerate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmentally inconsiderate</td>
<td>Environmentally considerate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Development strategies</strong></td>
<td><strong>Development strategies</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development without planning</td>
<td>First plan, then develop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism development everywhere</td>
<td>Development in suitable places</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New building</td>
<td>Re-use of existing building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development by outsiders</td>
<td>Local developers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employees imported</td>
<td>Local employment utilized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tourist behaviour</strong></td>
<td><strong>Tourist behaviour</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large groups</td>
<td>Singles, families, friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fixed programme</td>
<td>Spontaneous decisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Sights’</td>
<td>‘Experiences’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comfortable/passive</td>
<td>Demanding/active</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loud</td>
<td>Quiet</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3.2 PLANNING ISLAND TOURISM

The Seychelles belongs to the category Small Island Developing States (SIDS). States in this category have certain shared social-economic and political characteristics, which at an international political economy level places them in a low position (Yasarata et al, 2010). According to UNOHRLLS (unohrlls.org, 01042013), the common challenges faced by SIDS are; narrow resource base depriving them of the benefits of economies of scale; small domestic markets and heavy dependence on a few external and remote markets; high costs for energy, infrastructure, transportation, communication and servicing; long distances from export markets and import resources; low and irregular international traffic volumes; little resilience capacity to natural disasters; growing populations; high volatility of economic growth; limited opportunities for the private sector and a proportionately large reliance of their economies on their public sector; and fragile natural environments. Therefore, they are highly disadvantaged in their development process and require special support from the international community.

Tourism does play a significant role in economies of archipelagos and islands; however, mass tourism has caused concern regarding the possible growth and sustainability of these destinations. Tourism development policies must negotiate the complexity of hierarchical governmental structures, which could potentially create conflict and political difficulties not faced in individual islands. The three most significant challenges in archipelagos and islands are water supply, energy and transport with transport being the most problematic of them. The distance between islands and the modes and schedules of the type of transport linking the islands together are a vital part of the tourism policies in archipelagos. The difference will appear when most tourists stay in one
island rather than if multi-island travel occurs. The sustainability paradigm is complex and vague at the destination and on the local scale. Regardless, in archipelagos and islands it is urgent to implement sustainable practices if the destination has reached the maturity life cycle. Archipelagos depending on tourism may fear the decline of tourism because of the loss of economic power but also difficulty of finding appropriate economic alternatives for each island. The above-mentioned factors are common for mass tourism destinations (Bardolet & Sheldon, 2008). Another problem associated with resort dynamics in islands is that the rapid pace of tourism development often exceeds insular labour-force and natural resources limits. This displacement effect draws inputs and entrepreneurs away from agriculture and fishing and reduces the overall effectiveness of diversification. Island planners must plan for both the uncertainty of tourism and other kinds of instability. For example major currency realignments affect visitor flows because they can markedly alter the cost of transport and accommodation, the two largest trip-expenditures for long-haul vacations from the North to the island periphery (Apostolopoulos, Y & Gayle, D.J 2002).

Tourist expenditures are also highly sensitive to crisis and recessions in the major origin markets and may be more sensitive to international political realignments and civil unrest than any other industry. Natural disasters will always pose problems because they often destroy key coastal infrastructure and accommodation capacity. If recent assessments of global climate change are accurate, planners will have to anticipate ways to adapt to the potential impact of sea level rise on both natural (reefs, beaches, offshore cays, wetlands) and built (facilities and infrastructure) environments (Apostolopoulos, Y & Gayle, D.J 2002). From a SIDS analytical perspective, challenges also include communication and trading structures that inflate the prices of import and place export at a competitive disadvantage; labour markets include issues with limited skills base and reliance on expatriates; limited land area and non-existence of extractive minerals coupled with reliance on a limited range of primary commodity exports and finally small, fragmented domestic markets that lack critical mass (Yasarata et al, 2010).

Dependency theory proposes that the failure of less developed countries to develop reflects their economic and political position relative to developed nations. Global political-economic relations are such that rich, industrial nations are able to exploit poorer, peripheral nations and therefore prevent developmental opportunities. It has also been argued that international tourism may result in cultural dependency, whereby tourism planning and policy reflects external (western) ideals. The structures of international tourism, mostly between the centres’ and peripheral developing nations, strengthen rather than weaken global socio-economic inequalities. There are plenty of examples of local, small-scale developments that attempt to reverse the trend, yet much tourism continues to reflect the problems of dependency and the dominance of multinational corporations (Sharpley, 2009).

3.2.1 Tourism Planning

All functions in the state will impact on tourism policies and developments on different levels. Of all the roles that the government plays in tourism, the most important is probably the one of coordination. The ability for the government to coordinate and balance the various roles in the tourism development process will be affected by a successful implementation of the roles. It is argued that in the role of tourism there is a serious weakness in the machinery of
governments dealing with coordination of the tourism and co-operation with operators, either state or privately owned. The tourism industry is linked to many diverse and different kinds of products and services and is therefore a unique industry in the economy. The coordination is a political activity and can therefore be proved difficult in tourism, as there are a large number of parties involved in the decision-making (Hall, 1996). Planning for tourism appear in a number of forms, such as development, infrastructure, promotion and marketing, different structures of government organizations and from local to international scale (Hall, 1996, Syssner, 2011). In most forms of economic planning there is a desire of balancing the development of supply, which goes parallel with the demand of tourists. Planning for tourism tend to be an amalgam of economic, social and environmental considerations and is rarely exclusively to tourism. Planning is regarded to go hand in hand with tourism policy. Planning is essentially a political process, with the result of which may be indicative of the dominance of certain stakeholder’s interests and values, over other interests and values in the formation of policy. A regular conflict in the politics of tourism is the one of the tourism sector, which strives for a maximum economic benefit for the principles of the market, on the other hand striving for the interest of local participation in decision making (this is the principles of democracy) (Syssner, 2011).

A particular trend in tourism politics is that the local people, especially the poor, tend to be in disadvantaged positions in relation to lobby organizations and in worst case not included in the decision making process. Identified tensions in the processes of tourism, is particularly the ones of increased development and competition to meet sustainability. In general within research of politics and in the case of the tourism industry, there is proof of a large gap between theory and practice (Syssner, 2011). According to Syssner (2011), there is a difference between political ambitions or visions and actual implementation. In the beginning of the 1990s it was more or less demanded that tourism planning at all governmental levels should include environmental considerations, concerns over the social impacts of tourism and demands for greater community participation in their programs. In order to increase the financial contribution of tourism to government income many governments started acting as entrepreneurs and have therefore been more involved in the marketing of destinations (Hall, 1996). In the decision making process of tourism one may ask; who are the actors in the decision process? What is the relation between those actors and role players? The processes are built differently from one country to another and lie underneath various possibilities of structures shaped from a long historical process (Syssner, 2011).

The relationship between tourism and environment has long been recognized and tourism is an environmentally dependent activity; the tourism environment contents of the physical, social, cultural and political elements that all are of great significance. The tourism sector needs a lot of resources as the development and practice consumes resources, creates waste and therefore needs substantial infrastructural development. In the long-term success of tourism, an attractive and healthy environment is important and environmental sustainability is required to enhancing tourism’s development potential. Tourists may, for example, greatly value an undeveloped preserved environment whereas locals may be of the opinion that they should use this as a resource for development. On the contrary, other locals may view the same as an area to protect. Opinions about the environment, local communities needs and environment management policies all change over time. The natural or built destination environment is typically seen as a single, distinct, given unit that must be managed or unspoiled though, at the same time, used for touristic consumption. However, there is no single environment, even within a particular
destination. The environment is defined by the various opinions of different local groups, the thoughts and anticipations of tourists, regional and national policy makers and so on. Given the previous, it ought to be said that any tourism development policy should consider the varying needs and perceptions of local communities and not only of the need of potential tourists (Sharpley, 2009).

We have now explained the work on planning tourism, but we also need to mention some criticism of tourism planning. Central to tourism planning, and any industry planning, is the measure of centralization in any given country. In many developing countries, tourism planning is often centralized and most decisions are made through government intervention rather than pluralism. In other words the dominators of the country rationalize their decisions in a bureaucratic tradition; unwilling to give up the potential for personal gain instead of benefits to the community. The importance of the government’s communication and involvement of the locals in planning and management decisions is high, but also to offer a fair distribution of the benefits and costs among the stakeholders. It has been proven that it is important to draw the best examples from master plans and work towards an integrated planning structure, in particular to a sustainable approach in tourism planning (Yasarata et al, 2010). Although, in 1980, UNWTO suggested that many tourism master plans were prepared but rarely implemented because they were too complex. They are seen to be financially impractical and somewhat disconnected from the institutional arrangements. They are also perceived to be unrealistic with regards to political management and the complexity of tourism multipliers is often misused or abused (Yasarata et al, 2010).

3.2.2 Eco-certifications and Environmental Governance

As a technique of product assessment, environmental auditing has given rise to the certification of specific products. These have satisfied certain environmental and social criteria of production. The first eco label was created for the coffee and chocolate industry to gain economic return to the producer and to use as a proof of being environmentally friendly. An eco label is an approval awarded to a service whose provision is to satisfy a number of conditions. A label should gain producers and consumers and not harm the environment. In the 1990s the eco labels entered the tourism industry and intends to show that hotels or tour operators act responsibly towards the environment including the society, the local people and the respect of labour rights. An eco label usually offers the use of a logo. In the 1990s a large amount of eco labels were created worldwide, which made it a jungle for the tourist. Unfortunately, the amount of labels showed the opposite expected effect and there was instead a lack of demand in labelled hotels and holidays. The difficulties with creating a worldwide recognized label could undermine the potential of certifications in sustainable tourism (Mowforth & Munt, 2003). According to Buckley (2012), environmental policies, management measures and technologies can reduce many tourism impacts, but few tourists’ select sustainable products; instead they expect good environmental management routinely. UNEP has in a report from 1997 seen eco labels as part of the worldwide movement by industry towards self-regulation, a movement which is demonstrating how responsible an industry can be towards environmental issues and how voluntary action can stimulate or even replace formal legislation. Labels and certifications should be well organized, schemed with coordination and monitored for compliance with specified
criteria rather than merely a commitment to improve the establishment. The certification should cover all aspects of sustainability, which means environmental, social, cultural and economic aspects (Mowforth & Munt, 2003). Mowforth & Munt (2003) also mean that the private-sector approaches to sustainability, such as self-regulation, corporate social responsibility, eco-certification and destination marketing and de-marketing, have been promoted widely, but proved largely ineffective. Furthermore, the UNEP report show that eco labels are too young to be proven and measures of the labels effectiveness need to be implemented. An eco-certification is one way of implementing sustainable tourism development practices and a way for STB to solve environmental problems and impacts of tourism in the Seychelles.

Since the 1990s there has been a growing concern with the influence, role and effects of partnerships on government in the critical tourism studies, to solve environmental problems. The increasing importance of tourism partnership for achieving a successful environmentally sustainable tourism development has urged many studies. A diverse range of motivations in mind can be established in the networks for environmental governance. It has been emphasised that collaboration in networks is necessary since network agents contribute more to environmental sustainability than individual stakeholders. It has also been said, by Erkus Öztürk & Eraydin (2010), that cooperation is a major issue in the tourism planning area and linked to the idea of sustainable tourism development. Administrators are therefore looking for more valuable and easy ways for the ministries to work in partnership with industry actors, NGOs, private sector, voluntary and professional groups to implement strategic tourism initiatives. There is also an increasing tendency to develop cross-border partnership to define joint policies and planning practices besides the partnerships between only local and national agents. This has been proved from the competitiveness success in the global arena through its global networks. According to Hall, referred in Erkus Öztürk and Eraydin (2010), eco tourism policies are complicated as multiple levels of public governance, from local to global need to be covered. Conflicts are therefore common due to multiple actors and small businesses feel disadvantaged. The extent of environmental governance is confined to an imagined global level but it is still the local gathered activities that dominate the importance (Erkus Öztürk & Eraydin, 2010).

In short terms the environmental governance refers to the set of regulatory processes, mechanisms and organizations, through which political actors involve environmental actions and outcomes in the decision-making. Governance includes the actions of the state, communities, businesses, NGOs and therefore is not the same as government. There are different keys to environmental governance such as the political-economic relationships that institutions embody and how these relationships shape identities, actions, and outcomes, but we will not go further with the forms (Carmen Lemos & Agrawal, 2006).
4.0 RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

In this chapter we have a creative dialogue between the interview results and the different theories to create a dense and cohesive story, in a narrative analysis. Our results and analysis are therefore reported in a continuous interpretive text, interspersed with interview sequences. Results and analysis are divided into two parts, ‘sustainable practices’ and ‘perceptions of tourism development in the Seychelles’ due to the recurring topics in the interviews. The presented results include nine qualitative interviews with different accommodation establishments located on Mahé, Praslin and La Digue in the Seychelles. Three SSTL-certified, three small and three large hotels participated in the study. To be able to give 100% anonymity, establishments location will not be mentioned or compared, neither will we report duration in business or the work position of the interviewee. The result is not aiming to generalise the situation in the Seychelles, neither to go deeper into each island and its issues. Instead a variety of people from different islands and different sizes of establishments represent the overall perceived situations. First, we present the results of sustainable practices at both SSTL-certified and non-certified hotels and 'comments on the Seychelles Sustainable Tourism Label' from non-certified hotels. Thereafter, we present the themes ‘tourism development and governance’, ‘labour force’ and ‘competition’. See Annex 6 pp50-51 for interview questions. We have classified ‘small hotels’ as hotels with 1 to 25 rooms and ‘large hotels’ as hotels with more than 25 rooms. The codes for the interviewees are as follows; CH1, CH2 and CH3 are SSTL-certified hotels, SH1, SH2 and SH3 are small hotels and LH1, LH2 and LH3 are large hotels.

4.1 SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES

To be able to understand the requirements of the SSTL-criteria and to understand challenges of sustainable practices we interviewed the three certified hotels. In addition, we asked the non-certified hotels if and how they perform sustainable practices. We also asked for their perceptions of the SSTL-certification. The results and analysis are presented in a continuous text, interspersed with theories.

4.1.1 Sustainable Practices at SSTL-certified Hotels

The SSTL-certified hotels are performing sustainable tourism practices in their establishments and were more or less thinking in a sustainable way before being labelled. This agrees with the UNEP report (Mowforth & Munt, 2003) saying that the worldwide movement goes towards self-regulation within sustainability. This movement demonstrates how responsible an industry voluntarily can be towards environmental issues. The work involves saving electricity and water by the use of energy saving bulbs, collect rainwater for garden plant use, sorting waste, usage of environmentally friendly products for swimming pool and washing machines, work closely with the community, use local products and local food as much as possible, reuse paper for printing, encourage staff and tourists to be sustainable and much more. They work carefully with guest feedback and inform the guests of savings in the hotel such as water shortage on the island. This was shown with signs in the rooms, where they encourage guests to think of the
towels and not leave them for washing every day, turn off the air condition while outside the room, one of them also have a pre-setting on the air condition not to exceed below 21 degrees Celsius. To implement sustainable practises some challenges face the hotels:

'The tourist arriving here need to adapt to our hotels approaches, but it is hard to change people’s attitude but we try to convince tourists to think the way we think.' - CH2

This disagrees with Buckley (2012), which says that few tourists’ select sustainable products; instead they expect good environmental management routinely. We interpret that tourists expect the hotels to perform the sustainable service for them, instead of themselves participating in the practise. Most likely because they are up-market tourists and demand high-end services.

The main reasons for joining the label were to save costs, water and energy. They also expressed that it is a moral satisfaction and important way to show tourists and the community that they care for the environment. It also seemed that the label was a selfish choice, instead of a suggestion from STB.

'Save costs. We save water, we save electricity. It is basically a very selfish motivation, but at the end of the day everybody benefits from the label.' - CH1

High costs for energy is, according to UNOHRLLS (unohrlls.org, 01042013), a common challenge faced by SIDS. We interpret CH1 as a deliberate choice of saving money, instead of saving the environment. The most important regards of sustainability to CH1 was to save electricity and water, but for CH2 instead the most important was to include people and the environment and to be conscious about that, otherwise they will not get as many tourists. It was also mentioned that cooperation with other hotels was not an option, instead ‘better to stay out of trouble’, as CH1 said. CH1 also preferred not to collaborate with other hotels, which disagrees with the label criteria and Sharpley’s (2009) principles of sustainable tourism development.

The SSTL is perceived as a marketing tool and a moral satisfaction to the hotels. They strive to be sustainable and have practiced sustainability for a while, but they find it hard to adapt this to the staff. Maybe they cannot see what they gain from it? This could be seen as each one’s responsibility and culture of sustainability, for the owner or the management, but to be able to adapt this new culture into the staff is perceived difficult.

'We are not perfect; we have our problems as well. It is competitive, because many hotels are starting to think about the environment now. We are stronger because we have the label.' - CH2

If they are to be different with the label, what will happen when more hotels have the label? One of the most important keys to sustainable tourism, according to Sharpley (2009), is to be different. This include being different as a destination as well, it cannot be used as something unique in the future. It was for the certified hotels difficult to prove all the benefits from the label at this stage, as it has only been in business less than a year but also because the three certified hotels were already thinking in a sustainable way. Unfortunately, Mowforth & Munt (2003) mean that eco-certifications have been promoted widely, but proved largely ineffective. CH1 could although assure that the electricity and water bill would have been at least 25 % - 30 % more. It is too early to see if they are getting more tourists from the label, but they are receiving positive
comments. The interviewees do advise all hotels to be assessed properly and get involved in the environment and aim for certification through SSTL. The interviewees mean that the work also benefits the community and by the label one show responsibility for the environment. CH2 says that one difference from before is that they are always being audited and checked by authorities, even if it is a hassle it helps them with SSTL guidelines. Either way, the negative side of having the label will always outweigh the positive effects.

'I wish all the other hotels could do the same thing. It could have a very good impact on the Seychelles. Once they achieve it, to keep it, and keep improving and go forward instead of going backwards.’ - CH3

The certified hotels think that the government should take more responsibility and step in and help hotels with labels and support the practices, different criteria fits different sizes and duration of establishments. This is a common problem, as Hall (1996) argues that in the role of tourism there is a serious weakness in the machinery of governments dealing with coordination of tourism and co-operation with operators.

What the hotels wish is to install solar panels, save electricity, but not all establishments have suitable roofs for this, nor financial possibility. What the interviewees suggest is that the government instead should consider giving a reduced price or a VAT reduction to encourage all hotels to use solar panels. The hotels are also planning to focus more on the collection of rainwater and reduce the treated water usage, which is a big issue in the Seychelles. The water supply is a common challenge for archipelagos and islands according to Bardolet & Sheldon (2008). CH3 mentioned that the government are currently shutting down the water: ‘the water is only open for six hours a day’ (from April to October). The water shortage situation has been discussed not only in the Tourism Master Plan, but also among many of our interviewees. Although, CH2 thought the opposite, that there is a lot of water in the Seychelles, but it needs to be collected and managed properly and the government fail to do this.

Even though the hotels separate the waste, they have identified the problematic way the government manage the waste. According to the interviewees, all the waste goes to the same landfill; there is a lack of recycling and a big problem with the plastic bottles. This could seriously affect the environment in future. The lack of land and space for recycling is a well-recognized problem in the Seychelles; it is something that several interviewees see a potential development of, as do we.

4.1.2 Sustainable Practices at Non-certified Hotels

Part of the study was to find out how the non-certified hotels work with sustainable practices, with guidelines from SSTL’s criteria (see complete criteria in Annex 5 p49). This was to get an understanding how close to the concept they were and what the culture is regarding sustainability.

Not all non-certified hotels knew the concept of sustainable development and the definitions of being environmentally friendly. Practices vary from one hotel to another because of size and location. All six hotels try to work with local labour force, but as mentioned in previous analysis there is lack of labour force and some certain competence needs to be imported from abroad.
This is, according to Yasarat et al (2010), a common challenge for SIDS. They have different contacts with tour operators, car hires, restaurants and boat cruisers. Although, it has been noted that they do not always work with other hotels, or do direct business as one said:

‘Hotels change their management, and they don’t have time to follow up on their deals, so it doesn’t pay off to make deals with them.’ - SH2

This feeling was connected to the problems in the area of high turnover rate of staff and management. This is a non-sustainable way of working and, once again according to Sharpley (2009); a sustainable way is to collaborate with other businesses to build local capacity. The waste problem was again brought up and the hotels try to separate the waste. Although, they mean that it is not very popular and blame the poor management on the government. There are although some solutions to this situation:

‘Frankly, here on the island they do not separate the waste at all. Maybe with education the people will sort everything; plastic bags, glass, but it is not like that, you just put everything in one bin and all the waste end up in the same dumpster. It is impossible to recycle.’ - SH1

‘There is not a proper recycling management going on from the governments side. Plastic is recycled, but not the glass and the glass is a huge issue because it takes longer to degrade. And it can be done! This can create whole new industries, because you pay people to crush the glass, things that can be put into building and construction, because it can be used in paving’s, for the roads. It definitely can be done! And it was being done!’ - SH2

The water shortage in the Seychelles is according to many of the hotel a big issue. The sewage water, river water and rainwater are being used for watering of plants and garden. They have ideas of collecting more water, as some of them do not have tanks to collect the rainwater. They also say that they cannot rely on water from the government.

‘The government promised that there will not be any water shortage through the new desalination plant, which is not true. A lot of things have been done for the water individually but not from the governments side on storage. It would be too expensive, for the small hotel for example to have a desalination plant, the maintenance is too expensive and we are lacking of expertise.’ - LH3

Most of the hotels inform the guests of the water shortage situation and also the savings in electricity. Some of them have signs in regards of less frequent washing towels, and strive to be a bit more green orientated and minimize consumptions. LH1 did say that they have to change towels and sheets every day, that it is their standard: ‘If the tourists want the room to be cleaned every day we have to do that’. In some way one may think that there is a desire of being more sustainable but they blame the actions on the demand from tourists. They might see no other way, because of other standards with star grading or high prices. The high prices may lead to a higher demand in services. The financial savings one can get from sustainability can save money to put in other areas of the establishment. Many hotels do organic farming and try to use as many local products as possible. Due to seasonal shortage (heavy rain, too hot, too dry) a lot of fruits and vegetables
need to be imported. As noted by Yasarat et al (2010), depending on importation is common for islands.

The non-certified hotels work with guest feedback, strive to be chemical free, reduce the use of paper and focus a lot on community work by sponsoring different events. The electricity saving is a concern and the interviewees use energy saving bulbs, advise guests to turn off the air condition when leaving the room. One hotel also installed a device that turns off the air condition when guests leave the room. Solar panels was a future desire for many of our interviewees, mainly because savings but also from the unstable electricity in the country. Some of them are using solar panels already and noticed reduction on the bill, and LH3 heard from experts that solar panels could cut about one third of the fuel costs. As stated before, solar panels are expensive to install and not all buildings are suitable for the purpose. Bad experience has also occurred as one said:

'We started with water solar panels, but it did not work. We had to change it twice in one year!' - SH1

The use of solar panel is environmentally friendly and, according to Sharpley (2009), the more established a destination resort is, the more likely it is that concern about the environmental consequences of tourism will be less than in the newer, emerging destinations. In other words, the new hotels are more concerned and aware of the impacts of tourism but also have the ability to perform the new installations in their buildings. Once again the hotels think it is up to the government to come up with ideas, or reduce taxes to make it more feasible to perform sustainable practises with the solar panels for example. The most important concern of sustainability for the non-certified hotels were: water and electricity, service and environment, keep the place green, plant more, educate staff, if there is no service to the tourists, there is no sustainability, according to them.

'If you do not have one you do not have the other, it is not worth it. Protecting the environment is beneficial for the hotel.' - LH3

4.1.3 Comments on the Seychelles Sustainable Tourism Label

All non-certified hotels think that an eco-certification is a good approach towards sustainability. It is perceived positively as tourists sometimes demand it. There is a general interest in joining the label mainly because of the advantages of using it as a marketing tool. They also believe it benefits the environment. But the opinions are not the same for all of them:

'We do our own things without having to have to pay for the label. You have to pay over €400 to have it, which I refuse. We should deeply encourage the label, this should be attaining for and you should be handing out these certificates to us to get us there, not for us to pay. Because if you're paying for something its not necessarily that you do bring it from the heart, its just for it to look good on the European market.' - SH2
'Yes, I heard of the label, and I will not be able to implement it. I think it is too expensive for us to adopt. I rather go and do something that would change my operating costs like solar energy than going through all the requirements of the label anyway.' - LH3

'I am still thinking about it, it is quite a cost to implement everything they want. It depends how much I will save. It needs to be done in a proper way, and for that you need a good, reliable person to do it. Its difficult to find the right person like that here...they are not good enough. They are not as educated as they need to be to implement all this.' - SH3

One may ask if it is better to perform sustainable practices rather than getting labelled? From our interviews we see that most non-certified hotels are already performing some sort of sustainability work in their establishments. Again, the UNEP report (Mowforth & Munt, 2003) says that the worldwide movement goes towards self-regulation within sustainability. The movement demonstrates how responsible an industry voluntarily can be towards environmental issues. It does not seem like something new or difficult for our interviewees to be concerned about the environment. There is however a difference in terms of being ‘environmentally friendly’ and STB need to communicate their goals to the stakeholders and businesses. When running an accommodation establishment, to work eco-friendly is, according to us, easy, but it is also suggested. This is because the country is small and has a limit of resources. LH1 agree:

'Ve have to do it, our clients demands that also. It is not a difficult issue we have to do it! Sustainable tourism is a standard! Even the guesthouses need it.' - LH1

Prices vary to join the label (€400-€1000), depending on the size. As previous stated, SH2 and LH3 had a lack of interest in paying for the label and SH3 expressed that there was a lack of expertise in the area to implement it. As it is a governmental concept it can be perceived as a poor man’s game. When people have money, they are prepared to pay extra, even though the activities of tourism may harm the environment. For small guesthouses it might be difficult to have the financial possibility to implement the label. Larger hotels with foreign investments may have higher financial ability to implement a label. According to Sharpley (2009), the label can also be accused of greenwashing, and therefore loose its credibility. We believe this would not be the case of SSTL, since there is only one label offered by STB. Although, it is of highest importance that the certified hotels are continuously being audited.

One of our thoughts before the study was that the label price might control the hotels choices. It has also been said it is complicated to implement, and it seems like STB have had a weak approach to convince the hotels, as only three out of approximately 400 accommodations have joined the label upon this date (07/05/2013). This might also be because the label is new and, according to Mowforth & Munt (2003), there is in general little proof of effectiveness of labels even though they existed in the tourism industry since the 1990s. Our interviewees demand proof of financial gain from the label.

By implementing an eco-certification in the tourism industry, STB can control the situation of sustainability from ‘above’, and ensure the quality of businesses and environmental sustainability. There has been a demand, from our interviewees, of more practical situations of sustainability work from other hotels. They also wish for more involvement, rather than rules and
criteria, from organizations. The overall discussion we have experienced through this study is the mistrust towards the government and the constant dissatisfaction with the tourism development. This, in turn, might affect the work with SSTL negatively. This can be drawn to the theory of environmental governance with a desire of more influences from the locals in the decision-making (Erkus Öztürk & Eraydin, 2010).

What will happen if the hotels do not get certified? What will happen if they do not pass the auditing the label requires every year? Should the label be a national initiative and free of charge? If the image of the Seychelles is sustainable tourism, how will the image appear if the label is unsuccessful? Does this mean an overall image of non-sustainable country?

The government is well aware of the challenges in the different islands of Seychelles. As it is written in the Seychelles National Report 2012 p55:

‘The cost of doing nothing would be very high on the fragile national ecosystems and ultimately on the society of the Seychelles.’

As Yasarata et al (2010) express, it has been proven that it is important to draw the best examples from master plans, such as STMP and SNR, and work towards an integrated planning structure, in particular to a sustainable approach in tourism planning. We believe the sustainability initiative is the right approach for Seychelles, but the strategies need to be implemented.

From spending two months in the Seychelles we got the feeling that they strive to safeguard the environment. We, for example, saw paintings in public areas such as schools and bus stops, saying that people need to save water, electricity and the beaches. The country would, in long-term, gain from the label. We think all businesses should be environmentally friendly and it is positive that they are already working towards being sustainable. According to Mowforth & Munt (2003), sustainable tourism development might be used as an excuse for the expansion of tourism. Have sustainable tourism development become an excuse to go into mass tourism for the Seychelles? Or are they not realizing that they are?

4.2 PERCEPTIONS OF TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN THE SEYCHELLES

The themes presented here are based on our interviewee’s recurring topics. The themes are as follows: ‘tourism development and governance’, ‘labour force’ and ‘competition’. The results and analysis are presented in a continuous text, interspersed with theories.

4.2.1 Tourism Development and Governance

‘Tourism is a growing industry, the government has now recognized the importance of tourism and they are putting all their efforts and energy into conserving it and also bring it to another level’ - CH2

Seychelles has since the early 1990s wished to be a global leader within sustainable development. Since then Seychelles has changed their strategies slightly every decade, but has continued to improve the sustainable development concept by including all aspects that has been added by academics over the years. As mentioned, Seychelles has had an increase of tourism
accommodations and international tourist arrivals the last decades and it is due to continue. If the approved hotels are built by the year 2020 there will be a change from 8,574 beds to a new total of 15,000 beds. An interesting annotation is that over the years there have been a number of approvals of big hotels that has not been finished. These hotels are now abandoned and are only shells of what they could have been. In some cases, the owners have no intentions of continuing building. After a while, the houses will be worth next to nothing (see Image 1). Today one can see many construction sites around the islands as a result of the building approvals the government has given (see Image 2). The bed occupancy in Seychelles has never exceeded 57 % the last decade, which, according to STMP, is worrying since the bed number is expected to increase. The government have recently started to charge all companies a 0,5 % marketing fee to be able to increase the marketing towards new markets. The result is hoped to be an increase in international tourist arrivals. This is, naturally, a good thing for all those who depend on tourism for a living.

Nevertheless, this tourism development will put an enormous pressure on the infrastructure. According to UNOHRLLS (unohrrls.org, 01042013), SIDS already struggles with maintaining the infrastructure. Challenges the hotels have noticed are for example water shortage, problems with waste management, electrical power cuts and lack of labour force. On the other hand, the STMP points out that if there is not enough tourist arrivals there will be a bed over supply, a higher domestic competition followed by reduced room prices and lower growth in the turnover. This is the same scenario as our interviewees can see. We can then ask: How sustainable is the rapid pace of development if there already are major challenges in the industry? Conversely, there is an obligation of increasing the tourist flow enormously for hotels to stay in business. We will now go through the positive and negative aspects of tourism development as our interviewees see it.

Since Seychelles is a SIDS, one of the biggest challenges they have is that they depend on importation due to lack of resources and local products (unohrrls.org, 01042013). Our interviewees clearly see this as one of the biggest obstacles to run their businesses, because of the rise in prices, long shipping times, additional taxes, which all lead to high operating costs. Although, our interviewees do not see another option but turning to tourism.
‘Seychelles depends on importation, but we have always known that tourism is our major industry, it brings money to our country’. - LH2

According to Bardolet & Sheldon (2008), archipelagos depending on tourism may fear a decline in tourism, because of the economic power it brings, but also the difficulties of finding appropriate economic alternatives for each island. These problems are common in mass tourism destinations, but in the case of Seychelles the fear seems instead to lie with the increase of tourism.

‘Tourism in the Seychelles has got a great future, provided we do not fall into the same mistakes like other destinations, for example Mauritius next door. Mauritius went through a boom in the tourism industry, which has become some sort of mass market. It was a very exclusive market, which it is not anymore and if Seychelles is not careful we will fall into the same problems due to overbuilding. Too many rooms and not enough people to occupy them. But also it is the question of the environment itself. Like our island, I think we have already reached our maximum for which we can take over the next 10 years’. - LH3

‘I do not want Seychelles to become overdeveloped, like certain parts of Spain where you stumble over hotels where it is all jammed and packed together. If the government does not step in and is not tight on planning, permissions granted at certain projects as well, we could face a disaster environmentally and definitely tourism wise, because who would come here for its uniqueness if we do not have forests left over, beautiful bays, marinas and things to explore? I see the mass tourism coming. There are another 350 planning projects on Mahé alone. How are you going to find people to fill those beds?’ - SH2

This indicates that most of our interviewees have a sustainable way of thinking and that the government's approach to sustainability has had the desired effect. What SH2 is referring to in Spain is mass tourism. Most of our interviewees demand to stop the development of new hotels because of the danger of destroying the environment. They also say there are not enough tourists to fill the beds, but none of them intend to decrease their businesses, instead the large hotels are planning on increasing. This is agreeing with Sharpley (2009), saying that a natural or built destination environment is typically seen as a single, distinct, given unit that must be managed or unspoiled though, at the same time, used for touristic consumption. He also mean that tourists may, for example, greatly value an untouched and undeveloped preserved environment whereas locals may have the opinion that they take this as a resource for development. Conversely, other locals may view the same as an area to protect. In our interviews, one interviewee stood out from the rest and disagreed with the others about the tourism development spoiling the environment.

‘The more tourism we have in the Seychelles, the better for the income of the Seychelles. Then we would get more infrastructure and shops and it will give the local people more work. With more hotels it would never really spoil the islands, but with the amount of hotels we have got, the tourists are not enough for everyone. In Europe there are so many visitors everywhere, and it does not affect anyone. I don’t see why tourism growth would be catastrophic. We cannot put a limit on visitors. The more the merrier.’ - SH3
This is not an unusual approach, according to Sharpley (2009), but is more really merrier? As we have understood, the other interviewees and our study in the Seychelles proved that the infrastructure and environment were already under a lot of pressure. All the islands have problems with water shortages, frequent power cuts and the waste management is far from perfect, since most of the waste goes to landfill instead of being recycled. We would say, by wanting this sort of development, there is a lack of knowledge about the country’s challenges and especially the chosen path of sustainable tourism development.

One of the bigger topics during our interviews was the environment and one important question was: Does the state of the environment impact on the future growth of the tourism industry? Following quotes are examples of what all interviewees agreed on. That the state of the environment does impact on the future growth of the tourism industry.

‘Yes. Seychelles used to be a green environment, and now they are starting to build up on the mountain, this is a problem because when you come with the plane and you see a lot of big buildings the tourist start to feel a scar. I understand that we need to have houses, but we also need more restrictions. Not just let the “big guys” that have a lot of money build everything they want and cut all the trees, its not nice. It will be good if the government say that they are going to stop the building. But if they start to build again I think in the future we will see Seychelles turn out like Mauritius, with lots of buildings, no green and no trees…and its very hot here. Right now we have trees, but if they cut down everything we are going to die... we are going to be on a desert island.’ - SH1

‘Definitely, if we do not cut the planning why come to Seychelles? Because there is nothing left to see. We got to preserve our uniqueness, what is the point of coming thousands of miles away just to see another Mediterranean-looking place? It could be Asia. It could be Bali.’ - SH2

‘Yes. Some buildings have no respect for the environment whatsoever. It will take years before the vegetation grows back again.’ - LH3

‘Of course. Not to mention the overcrowding of the beach. If you have 160 rooms, and they are full, mean 320 people on the beach. It is totally stupid to build these big hotels. Where are these people going to go?’ - CH1

If we believe in what SH3 earlier said, the environment will not be affected negatively by tourism development, but according to the above there is a concern. Sharpley (2009) points out that tourism depends upon attractive physical and socio-cultural environments, but it also has the potential to damage or destroy it, if not handled correctly. We interpret the above comments as a genuine fear of destroying the environment and the uniqueness that Seychelles has. One of the principles of sustainable tourism development is ‘minimizing environmental impacts’ and ‘achieving conservation outcomes’. This means that tourism should consider both local and global environment impacts and support conservation of natural areas and minimize damage to them and the wildlife (Sharpley, 2009). One may then ask: with the recent development in the tourism industry, is Seychelles performing sustainable development? Our interviewees concerns
make us think otherwise. But what is the correct way to develop tourism in the Seychelles then? One interviewee put it this way:

‘The consultations between the government and the locals have not been very good. It used to when tourism was low, but when it started to go up, the private sector was not longer interesting. We are at the moment writing a lot of letters to the government and the ministers that decisions have been taken without consultations and that will have an negative impacts on the industry. For the regulations, for the small investors it takes a lot of time to get permissions and the bigger investors have more economic power and bring in a lot of money to the country, which means the government receive them with open arms, which is not always the case for the local investors. They need to stop being tempted and allow projects to go ahead, purely for short-term reasons. Avoid foreign investments as it is short term solutions.’ - LH3

CH2 mentions the same statement, but several interviewees also feel that the government’s regulations and planning have gone over their heads, without consulting them. Hall (1996) mentions that the ability for the government to coordinate the various roles in the tourism development process will be affected by a successful implementation of the roles. It is argued that there is a weakness in the machinery of governmental dealing with coordination of tourism, because the tourism industry is linked to many diverse and different kinds of products and services. Syssner (2011) notes that a particular trend in tourism politics is that the local people tend to be in disadvantaged positions in relation to lobby organizations and the worst case not included in the decision making process. Identified tensions in the processes of tourism, is particularly the ones of increased development and competition to meet sustainability. We interpret our interviewees’ comments as dissatisfaction with the planning process and their exclusion of them in the decision-making. Combined with the theories, we would say that Seychelles is not an exception; they have the same problems with governance as many other countries.

‘I do feel that the government change rules without consulting us as well. It makes things very difficult.’ - SH2

‘In the beginning the government were not consistent at all. Lately I have seen some changes, which is positive, but initially it was a complete mess. People were getting license and impact assessment were not done properly so you saw construction everywhere and then impacts and things went bad. The planning is not done properly… they fail to really see what we need, they only see what they want. I think they are starting to get on the right track now, and lets hope they keep on the right track.’ - CH2

One important thing to add in the discussion of the planning is that, during our study, we could not find any action plans in the Seychelles Tourism Master Plan 2012-2020. By action plan, we mean a plan for implementing the research done in the master plan. STMP does contribute with relevant and valuable information for the tourism development to be sustainable in the Seychelles, which is why it is important to make use of it.
'There are no regulations; the Tourism Master Plan has not been implemented yet. People can come and ask for a permission on certain sites and we give permission, but there is no planned development plan taking place at the moment.’ - LH3

‘We have the concept with us about sustainability but when it comes to politicians, they only talk about it and there is no action. We need a political will power.’ - SH2

UNWTO have expressed that many tourism master plans are prepared, but rarely implemented because they are too complex. They are seen to be financially impractical and somewhat disconnected from the institutional arrangements. They are also perceived to be unrealistic with regards to political management and the complexity of tourism multipliers is often misused or abused. Although, it is important to draw the best examples from master plans and work towards an integrated planning structure, in particular to a sustainable approach in tourism planning (Yasarata et al, 2010). We see an implementation of the STMP as an important part of a sustainable tourism development in the Seychelles.

Another issue that our interviewees brought up was that there has been a lack of information from the government of where the tax money goes.

‘We are being taxed on our earnings and this is going to the government, but we do not know where the money goes. People think: The tax we have to pay… How could we possibly cheat to get us out of that tax?’ - SH2

‘We do not know where the tax money goes, and we have asked them. It is supposed to go to marketing but we already spend a lot of our money on that, all businesses spend on average 5% of the turnover, which is a lot of money. Our concern is, how is the money spent? Is it really going towards tourism marketing or to the Ministry of Tourism to be spent on administration on travel for ministry staff or what?’ - LH3

‘Here in the Seychelles the education is free, health is free…and when you are 63 years old, we have a pension security. And those who are disabled, they have allowance. We know where the money goes. But it is hard for us to ask the foreigner to pay all these things… if they pay we have to give them the service for the money they pay.’ - SH1

As SH1 mentioned, many things in the Seychelles are free, which means that the government need to fund them somehow, most likely from taxes. This does not come as a surprise of course, but what needs attention in these comments is the dissatisfaction with communication between our interviewees and the government. LH3 also seem to be suspicious with how the money is used. Yasarata et al (2010) brings forward that dominators of a country often rationalize their decisions in a bureaucratic tradition; unwilling to give up the potential for personal gain instead of benefits to the community. But also to offer a fair distribution of the benefits and costs among the stakeholders. Where does the money really go? If our interviewees do not know, how can the system be working properly? The importance of the governments’ communication and involvement of the locals in planning and management decisions is very high. As earlier mentioned, this does not seem to be the case in Seychelles.
4.2.1 Labour Force

For Seychelles the tourism industry give jobs to approximately 11% of the population. However, the combination of direct and indirect tourism-generated employment is estimated to account for in excess of 40% of the total national workforce (SS). According to Sharpley (2009), depending on tourism and develop tourism is seen to be safe and has long been considered a valuable source of income. Despite this theory, two of our interviewees did not want to be dependent on tourism. They instead want more diversification and more options of income. Apostolopoulos, Y & Gayle, D.J (2002) mean that island planners must plan for both the uncertainty of tourism and other kinds of instability.

‘Tourism cannot keep us going totally with all the changes, so I do not want to put all my eggs in one basket, you have to diversify slightly. I do not want to always rely on tourism. I cannot predict how my income will be this month, like before, when it was easier. You cannot rely on tourism totally.’ - SH2

‘Personally, if I were to choose to invest I would not choose the tourism industry. Because of the high operating costs in the Seychelles and the competition compare to other destinations.’ - LH3

We see this as a reaction to recent development within the tourism industry. Our interviewees see difficulties with staying in the industry due to the high level of competition, operation costs and uncertainty of income. On the other hand, we have the hotels having to deal with a higher demand of labour force due to the rapid development of new hotels. According to Apostolopoulos, Y & Gayle, D.J (2002), a rapid pace of tourism development often exceeds insular labour force.

‘And now we have a problem with labour force, you are looking for Seychellois to work, but there is not a lot of Seychellois that can work because there are too many hotels, so you find yourself in future employing expatriates. If one of my staff leaves tomorrow and goes to another hotel it is difficult for me to recruit a new one. There is no unemployment in the Seychelles. If in the future a lot of expatriates will come to the Seychelles it is more difficult to employ them because the government are checking a lot of things and a lot of paperwork has to be done. It is hard! The government want you to work with the locals, but when I say we will work with the locals, there is none.’ - LH2

What LH2 said was explained by CH3 and LH3 as a result of the low salaries, and the dissatisfaction in the hotel industry with low salaries and poor working conditions. Some interviewees have lately recognised low and bad service, which they think is due to this dissatisfaction. Nevertheless, more and more hotels are forced to turn elsewhere for labour force. According to Dielemans (2008), countries like Thailand, and other mass tourism destinations, depend on cheaper foreign labour to run the tourism business. This leads to leakage in the system and revenue as they pay their workers overseas. It is of course important to employ a local before an expatriate, if possible, but with the forthcoming development in the tourism industry,
we do not see any other choice but for the hotels to step outside their own country and bring in outsiders. It is therefore needed that the government has a dialog with the hotels regarding this matter to not make it harder to run the businesses. Nevertheless, if the labour force problem is managed and controlled by the government and if it is easy to employ foreign workers maybe the interviewees would not complain about the situation with lack of labour force? In a sustainable way of thinking, about a country's well being, it might not be seen sustainable to be depending on foreign labour force either? The more expatriates the more leakage and therefore a smaller multiplier effect for Seychelles.

4.2.2 Competition

As already stated, due to the many current accommodations and the many more government approvals of new hotels, our interviewees experience higher competition. According to Wahab & Pigram (1997) growth of tourism creates demand for land, and competition from potential buyers forces the price of land to rise. This is also a common consequence of mass tourism. This can be applied to the Seychelles as there are foreign investments and man made land built due to lack of sufficient existing land. The country sees the potential in foreign investments, as locals cannot afford to buy the land. Nevertheless, bed occupancy in Seychelles has not reached more than 57% in the last decade (STMP, 2012), which makes higher competition due to bed over supply understandable. This figure is small for a country that has tourism season all-year round.

'We have to take the low occupancy into consideration before we build more hotels, otherwise some existing hotels will just disappear.' - LH3

The low occupancy can, according to LH3 and LH2, also be the impact from the non-direct flight from Europe. CH2 said that if there are only large five star hotels to be built, only the rich can afford to come. Even though the prices of accommodations have increased, there is an impression by SH1 and SH2 that it is an overall expensive country for tourists and that the conservation sites are too expensive. They mean that the tourists find it difficult to afford entry. Nevertheless, the up-market tourists are what Seychelles has chosen to focus on to get a large income from a smaller number of visitors. This is naturally an easy way of being certain that not ‘everyone’ can afford to visit and therefore put less pressure on the environment. Although, according to Wahab & Pigram (1997), a high inflow of tourists naturally provokes a rise in prices of goods and services in a tourist region. In the case of Seychelles, it is not the tourist inflow that has determined the prices, but the government and the stakeholder’s choice of pricing differently. This choice of market was opposed by one of our interviewees:

'We need more tourists and we need a higher spending category, the tourists we have now are not spending very much. Even the large hotels are finding it hard to repay their loans. We should open up the country more.' - LH3

To still concentrate on the up-market tourists makes it more difficult for the smaller accommodations since many of them have lower prices and therefore a lower-price market
group. The smaller accommodations feel the fear towards the economically stronger large hotels. According to them, the five star hotels tend to lower the prices to a three star hotel, but are still giving the service of a five star. This makes it difficult for lower star-hotels, guesthouses and self-caterings to compete.

‘My only concern is that the size of the hotels they opened up. They had to drop the prices to a three star level to get people in. When they drop their rates everybody else has to drop as well, which means that the national income is dropping. It is not a benefit to the country.’ - CH1

Still, the large hotels feel competition from many of the smaller guesthouses, as they have been allowed by the government to open up an accommodation business on their properties. Many locals rented out rooms illegally a few years back, therefore the government opened up a ‘fast track’ solution (a fast and easy way to run a tourism accommodation). This fast track does no longer exist, but it brought forward many more businesses to compete with the already existing ones.

‘The government allow people to open up their houses and rent out small rooms and this is giving us a lot of competition.’ - CH3

The problem with competition is recognised by most of our interviewees and there is nothing they can do about it due to the free market in tourism and foreign investments with higher capital. Additionally, many of the interviewees mentioned that there is a lack of activities within the tourism industry today, that there is a need of creating more activities and opportunities for tourists while on holiday. This agrees with Sharpley (2009), saying that sustainable tourism development should include an increase in the experience for tourists. The question is: Have the accommodation businesses taken the focus from other possibilities to make a living? We mean that the government need to encourage locals to find new ways to get into the tourism industry, as the accommodations are overdeveloped already.

Wahab & Pigram (1997) also mention that holidays have become more standardized with fewer overnight stays because of faster and cheaper ways of travel. Sharpley’s (2009) characteristics of mass tourism also indicates that the mass tourist have fixed programmes. This is confirmed by some of our interviewees, saying that many tourists stay for a few days to then leave for another island. Their trips are also set and organized by tour operators as LH3 mentions:

‘The tour operators organize everything for the tourists before arriving here, we do not need to book anything. The entire schedule is set already.’ - LH3

However, all our interviewees have realized that more tourists need to come for all the hotels to get the revenue needed to stay in business.

‘The hotels that are coming up now will be empty if we do not get more tourists in, and that is going to be a problem. But there are too many hotels now, especially since last year. I do not know
the solution of this, but it is up to the government what they want. If they decide that they should give license to more hotels it is up to them, it is their choice, but it is their responsibility to fill it up. Only the future can tell what is going to happen.’ - CH3

It could be seen as the work end up in the hands of the government with the planning of the tourism development. The Seychelles has since the 1970s received international tourists and have since then relied on the tourism industry (together with fisheries). To depend on tourism is therefore not a new situation. To depend on tourism means that global crisis such as recessions, political instability, terrorism and natural disasters can affect the tourism flow to the country. This has not been identified as a major challenge by the interviewees and, although the tourism did decrease with the recession in 2008-2009. The overall trend shows although an increase from the year 2000 (see Figure 2). According to the forecast projections, tourist arrivals would increase from 208,000 up to 220,000 by 2017 (see Figure 3). It has been said that the country was not prepared for the recession and therefore we think that in the future, the country must be aware of the challenges in being dependent on tourism.

![Figure 2. Tourist arrivals in Seychelles from year 2000 to 2012 (Source: NBS, 06032013).](image-url)
A question that remains unanswered is if Seychelles should break the tourism dependency cycle and go back to only fisheries to help save the environment, to stop the over development? In the long-term, that might be the healthiest answer for the environment, to ‘detouristify’ the destination, but we would say that this no longer is an option. To build the establishments, many Seychellois have taken loans, therefore the existing and future accommodations need tourists, or else they will have no income to rely on to pay back the loans.

At the same time one can ask if Seychelles have succeeded in avoiding their worst fear of becoming a mass tourism destination? The above-mentioned results can be identified with Sharpley’s (2009) characteristics of mass tourism (Table 1), which are: rapid development, development by outsiders, uncontrolled, tourism development everywhere, new building and employees imported. According to theory and our interviewees’, Seychelles is, maybe unknowingly, working towards mass tourism on some levels.
5.0 CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to find out how the hotels perceive tourism development and perform the sustainable development initiative in the Seychelles. The study was also for us to obtain a deeper understanding of the Seychelles tourism industry. The questions that guided our study was:

1. Which major issues underlie the work on sustainable tourism development in Seychelles?
2. How do hotels perceive the tourism development in Seychelles?

Seychelles has since the early 1990s strived to be a global leader within sustainable development. In this study we learned that, by depending on tourism and performing sustainable development, Seychelles face many challenges mainly because they are a SIDS. One major challenge that we found was that they do not have enough resources to be completely independent from other countries. Seychelles therefore depend on importation of food, construction material etc. The resource they have is the extraordinary nature and warm climate, which is attractive to tourists. Tourism is therefore the main industry, which they depend on for a safe income. Tourism depends upon attractive physical and socio-cultural environments, but it also has the potential to damage or destroy it, if not handled correctly.

In line with sustainable tourism development, the government has chosen to implement an eco-certification for accommodations. The purpose is to provide a set of standards to guide sustainability work and improvements in the tourism industry. The certification is also a way for the accommodations to show that they are performing sustainable practices, and that they are ‘different’ from everyone else. We believe that, if Seychelles wants to be a leader in sustainable development, an eco-certification should be a standard instead of a way of being ‘different’. Those who do not have an eco-certification should be encouraged to achieve one, which will gain both the business and the country. This will also make sure that businesses are sustainable since they are being audited continuously. The general impression of the non-certified establishments was that they perform many of the required criteria for sustainability. There is however a dissatisfaction with paying for the certification.

Tourism in Seychelles puts a lot of pressure on the infrastructure, creates more waste and higher demand of fresh water and products. According to our research and interviewees, the mentioned are not working properly to be able to handle more tourists and accommodation establishments. The perception of the development is that the construction of new accommodation establishments should stop, because of fear of more competition, non-recoverable destruction of the environment, lack of labour force resulting in increased use of expatriates and insufficient tourist arrivals. They also believe that the tourism activities that exist are not enough. The critique for this imbalance is directed towards the government. Our interviewees find the governance as inconsistent and imbalanced. If the government want the businesses to be sustainable, our interviewees suggest tax reductions on products, such as solar panels, as they are very expensive.

During our study we have asked ourselves if Seychelles are using sustainable tourism development as an excuse for the expansion of tourism. We do not believe this is the case, but there are certain risks with the recent development. We therefore like to present a self-composed
chart of the perception of tourism development according to our interviewees and STMP. The markings are only indications of the topics our interviewees have highlighted during our conversations, and cannot be generalized. As seen on the chart, some of the themes are leaning more towards the concept of mass tourism instead of sustainable tourism, which is Seychelles initiative (see Figure 4).

**Figure 4.** Characteristics of tourism in Seychelles according to our interviewees.

When the Seychelles government chose to approve more hotels and the bed occupancy was not at a satisfactory level, the other hotels are now at a stage where they have to consider lowering their prices and step away from the up-market tourists. There is no way back now, Seychelles needs more tourists to survive at this point. Conversely, mass tourism is not a sustainable option. Seychelles needs to find alternatives to tourism, in order to be less dependent and be certain of protecting the environment. With the rapid development, lack of labour force and competition issues, Seychelles is, according to theory, alarmingly close to a lower level of mass tourism. Since Seychelles strive to be a global leader in sustainable development, the recent development may jeopardize this reputation. Conversely, the success of sustainability stands with managing the challenges faced as a SIDS and the future implementations of the Tourism Master Plan. Seychelles would then be a good example of a successful, sustainable tourism island. We can only hope that the approved hotels are not being built until the carrying capacity for each island has been completed. The carrying capacity will, hopefully, be the much-needed wake up call for the government to take action. Tourism and infrastructure must find a balance before more accommodations are built. So no, we do not believe more is merrier in the case of Seychelles.
5.1 Reflections

As we see it, the tourism industry in Seychelles cannot completely rely on sustainable tourism development but ironically enough need some sort of mass tourism at this point. It is not said that mass tourism must be cheap flights and cheap accommodation, mass tourism can also occur in an expensive, up-market destination like Seychelles. The up-market tourists might, however, contribute more to the pressure on the already instable infrastructure. This is, because they pay an extensive amount of money compared to cheaper destinations and therefore expect a high-end service. If we say that Seychelles is an eco-destination because of their extensive work with sustainability, would the tourist not be an eco-tourist then? Hall (1996) mean that, ‘the (ecological) footprint of an ecotourist is the same as a mass tourist’, which means that the whole concept of sustainability is ‘unnecessary’. By mentioning this, we are aware that we question the concept of sustainable tourism development. This is not our intention, but we want to bring forward the paradox underlying the concept. We still believe that the sustainable tourism development initiative is the best way for Seychelles to preserve their uniqueness. It just needs to be implemented properly.

5.2 Suggestions for Future Research

In this study we have chosen to focus on the hotels perspective, impacts and development, but further studies should be put into the locals, stakeholders and other businesses point-of-view as well, to get a wider perspective of the sustainability in the Seychelles. To generalize the sustainability, a quantitative study should be performed with all tourism establishments. For STB, this could mean a guide for future sustainability work.
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6.2 Articles


6.3 Reports


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6.4 Oral resources

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6.5 E-mail correspondence

Levkovic, Sinha, Manager SSTL. 16042013

6.6 Images

Figure 1: http://www.wordtravels.com/Travelguide/Countries/Seychelles/Map, 22052013
Figure 1: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/05/11/seychelles-map-population_n_860481.html. 22052013
Image 1: Janson, Elin, 31032013
Image 2: Janson, Elin, 06052013
ANNEX 1: Definitions

**Alternative tourism** is the way to develop tourism that is appropriate to local environmental, social and cultural values. Minimizes the negative consequences for local communities and to optimize the benefits in terms of local control by promoting meaningful encounters between locals and tourists and increase the local economy (Sharpley, 2009).

**Archipelago** is defined as either a large group of islands or a sea containing a large number of scattered islands (Bardolet & Sheldon, 2008).

**Carrying Capacity** - The number shows the total amount of tourist an actual destination can carry at any one time. A carrying capacity is needed because the impact of tourism often lead to the question of capacity, yet actual measurement of capacity and the subsequent imposition of limits in tourism plans are rare (Hall, 1996).

**Carbon offset** is the way one tourist can offset the carbon footprint financially, from the greenhouse gas emissions, through the transport by air for example (unwto.com, 20052013).

**Eclectic** - trying to combine ideas from different sources (ne.se, 17052013)

**Ecotourism** has in the tourism industry become some form of a buzzword. The developments of nature-based or ecotourism products is a response from the Western society to the benefit of environmental conservation, to achieve a greater active tourist participation, interest and concern for the environment and hence consumption. As ecotourism implies the potentially symbiotic relationship between tourism and conservation it is generally regarded as positive dimension of tourism. The concept of the environment in the search for sustainable forms of tourism development, such as eco-tourism, must include social and political dimensions as well as physical features. Hall argues that the potential concept of eco-tourism to be contributing to sustainable tourism development maybe somewhat problematic, as it suggest and must include improvements in income and its distribution, in health, in education, freedoms, and access to resources (Hall, 1996).

**Ecological footprint** is the technique that can be adapted for use by tour operators to measure a ‘holiday footprint’ for a tourist and for the tours they run. The technique measures the impact of a given holiday in terms of resources it uses, relatively to a notional annual allowance per person of resources available for use. This measure can indicate sustainability (Mowforth & Munt, 2003).

**Fair trade tourism** - The concept is an international movement to secure a fairer deal for Third World producers, and is most readily associated with products like bananas and coffee. The principals has now been attempted to apply to holidays. Because the wages and the share of total profit are usually lowest at the source of production, fair trade seeks to achieve a realistic wage per production cost for the most economically marginalised and vulnerable in the production and logistic chain. This is a way of thinking more principles, fair and pure profit rather than seeking the lowest costs (Mowforth & Munt, 2003).

**Fast track** - Was a term used to facilitate the application and approval of a change of use of a residential house to a self-catering tourism establishment. The criteria used was lower than that of the STB minimum criteria, and it somewhat by passed a number of policies on tourism development such as not building in heavily residential areas. The main aim with fast track was to
absorb illegal businesses, basically make it easy for them to apply for a licence. It started in October 2010 and ended beginning of 2013 (Levkovic, 16042013).

**Greenwashing** is when a business is performing less environmental friendly activities and safeguarding themselves from accusation, by using a eco label or other marketing to “cover” the action. This means that the products, services and other activities may have green- or eco-labels attached to them, but their environmental credentials may be difficult to detect or measure (Mowforth & Munt, 2003).

**Tourism multiplier effect** - Costs and benefits of tourism can be illustrated in the example of a holiday village. Holiday villages are responsible for social costs and benefits that are not paid or received by the investor, but by the locals who live and work there. The social benefits of a hotel can be explained in the tourism multiplier effect. The expenditure of a hotel creates VAT, which becomes direct income to the region. A second part leads to local business transactions when the hotelier must restock inventories (bread, vegetables, fruit etc.). A third part of the expenditure is used to pay profit taxes, local taxes, etc., to local, regional or national governments. A fourth part is spent on leakages such as imports of goods (e.g. liquor, furniture etc.) and payment of profits to people and organizations outside the country. After each round of this multiplier effect the regional effects become smaller. What the tourism multiplier effect takes for granted is, for example, that the money invested stays in the same area. It does not account for a possible leakage effect to foreign investors (Wahab & Pigram, 1997).

**Responsible tourism** is travel that care for the local communities, cultures, wildlife conservation and the environment. The aim is to create a change in the tourism industry for the better to all stakeholders involved (responsibletourismnetworking.com, 20052013, responsibletravel.com, 20052013).

**Up-market tourism** is tourism that focuses on the richer parts of the world as their visitors and this brings economic benefits, such as higher earnings from smaller numbers (Stabler M.J, 1997).
ANNEX 2: Abbreviations

GDP - Gross Domestic Product: “The total value of all goods and services produced by an economy over a given period of time, usually a year” (Wall & Mathieson, 2006:106).
NGO - Non-governmental Organization
SIDA - Swedish International Development Agency
SIDS - Small Island Developing States
SNR – Seychelles National Report
SSTL - Seychelles Sustainable Tourism Label
STB - Seychelles Tourism Board
SS - Seychelles Strategy 2017
SSDS - Seychelles Sustainable Development Strategy 2012-2020
STMP - Seychelles Tourism Master Plan
UN - United Nations
UNEP - United Nations Environment Program
UNOHRLLS - Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island States
UNWTO - United Nations World Tourism Organization
VAT - Value-added tax
WTO - World Tourism Organization
WWF - World Wide fund of Nature

Accommodations

CH1: SSTL-Certified hotel 1
CH2: SSTL-Certified hotel 2
CH3: SSTL-Certified hotel 3
SH1: Small Hotel 1
SH2: Small Hotel 2
SH3: Small Hotel 3
LH1: Large Hotel 1
LH2: Large Hotel 2
LH3: Large Hotel 3
### ANNEX 3: Operational Accommodation Establishments in Seychelles 2013

**SUMMARY by Category**

**No. of Operational Accommodation Establishments**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category/Island</th>
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<th>Beds</th>
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<td><strong>Grand Total</strong></td>
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(Source: STB, 13032013)
## ANNEX 4: Ownership of Seychelles Tourism Accommodations

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<th>Beds</th>
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<td>4868</td>
<td>56.0</td>
<td>399</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1136</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL EXCLUDING FAST TRACK</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>100 % Foreign-Owned</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Partly Seychellois-Owned</td>
<td>1136</td>
<td>13.3</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: STB, 03062013*
ANNEX 5: Seychelles Sustainable Tourism Label Criteria (2013)

1. Management
The Management Section includes policy, monitoring, health and safety. This section requires some sustainability documentation that will ensure the hotel’s sustainability initiatives are undertaken systematically. It requires that progress is monitored over time and that opportunities for further improvements are identified. Sustainability practices are communicated to the staff, guests, and other stakeholders with the aim of raising the overall awareness of sustainability and creating a positive impression.

2. Waste
Waste has a number of potentially serious environmental impacts, risk to health. The most obvious impact is the waste that is sent to a landfill. On a small island, landfill waste toxins can easily leach into the soil and eventually back to the sea. Waste reduction is a widely understood and visible form of sustainable practice and therefore presents a good opportunity to foster support from guests, staff, and the community.

- Reducing, Reusing and Recycling are effective ways of cutting business costs.

3. Water
The broad aim of water-related practices is to reduce the amount of fresh water used by hotels. This reduces the impact on fresh-water supplies as well as the potential for water pollution. As with waste, the first step is to reduce water use through conservation and rainwater collection, and then to explore options for water reuse and recycling.

4. Energy
Energy typically comprises up to 50% of a hotel’s utility operating costs. Reducing energy use is the area that is likely to have the most significant financial benefits to an enterprise. Energy reduction practices can consist of ‘management’ practices that change staff and/or guest behaviour in order to reduce energy use.

Examples include staff turning out lights and guests choosing not to have their towels laundered so frequently. There is also a range of practices that require investment in appliances, insulation, heating, or other energy-efficient technology. These investments often pay for themselves in the medium term.

5. Staff
Staff and guest-related practices are of significant importance to the sustainability of a hotel enterprise and of tourism in the Seychelles. The Staff criteria aim to recognise fair treatment of staff and staffing opportunities given to local people to reduce staff turnover and encourage loyalty.

6. Conservation
Most sustainability practices focus on reducing the negative impact of a business on the environment or the community in which they operate. The community and conservation criteria reflect the fact that an important part of sustainable tourism is to make a positive contribution to the local community and to local conservation activities.

7. Community
A hotel can get recognition for the community and conservation practices, it is necessary to keep a record of such activities. This may include receipts or letters of gratitude from community groups, photos of conservation work, or testimonials from community members.

8. Guests
The Guest criteria recognize the importance of guest satisfaction to the sustainability of the business. Satisfied guests go home and recommend Seychelles to their friends. Word of mouth is one of the most effective forms of tourism marketing.
ANNEX 6: Interview Questions

1. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR CERTIFIED HOTELS

Please, tell us about your hotel... owner (local, foreign), how many beds, what kind of tourists do you get etc.

1. Certification

1. Would you please tell us why you chose to have your hotel certified? Was it enforced or voluntarily? (What did you hope to gain from the certification?)
2. What does the certification process itself involve? (How does one proceed to go about it)?
3. What, according to you, is the most important aspect of sustainability with regard to your hotel?
4. Have you observed any difference since the certification, in terms of
   a) Savings
   b) Resources
   c) Consumption
   d) Marketing
   e) Moral satisfaction with ones work?
5. Have there been noticeable differences in the number of tourists staying at your hotel since its certification?
6. Would you recommend other companies to get certified?
   a) If so why?
   b) If not, why not?
7. Will you continue being a certified hotel?

2. The Tourism Market

8. Could you tell us about the competition between your hotel and other certified and non-certified hotels?
9. What is your opinion on tourism in the Seychelles?
10. What is your opinion on tourism growth in the Seychelles?
11. How will your business develop over the coming ten years?

3. Dependency on Tourism

12. Do you run the hotel full-time? Or is the hotel simply an additional source of income?
13. What according to you are the pros and cons of working in the tourism sector, in terms of
   a) Income-dependency
   b) Sustainability work
   c) Type of tourist
   d) Price-setting

4. Sustainability work

14. Do you have any specific cooperation with other hotels in Seychelles concerning sustainability?
15. Do you have any future plans concerning sustainability work at your hotel?
16. Do you feel that the state of the environment will impact on the future growth of the tourism industry in Seychelles?
2. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR NON-CERTIFIED HOTELS

1. The Tourism Market
   1. Tell us about your hotel...(who is the owner, number of beds, type of hotel, employers, type of tourists etc.)
   2. Number of occupied beds per year? Seasonality?
   3. What is your view on tourism in the Seychelles?
   4. What is your view on tourism growth in the Seychelles?
   5. What changes would you like to see in the tourism industry in the Seychelles?

2. Dependency on tourism
   6. Do you run the hotel full-time? Or is the hotel simply an additional source of income?
   7. What according to you are the pros and cons of working in the tourism sector, in terms
      a) Income-dependency
      b) Sustainability work
      c) Type of tourist
      d) Price-setting

3. Sustainability work
   8. What do you think makes your hotel different compared to others?
   9. What is the secret behind you staying in business (sustainable)?
   10. Do you have any specific cooperation with other hotels in Seychelles in relation to sustainability work?
   11. Have you heard of the concept “sustainable development”?
   12. Do you perform sustainable practices at your hotel? In terms of:
      a) Energy-saving, water conservation and waste management
      b) Protecting the environment
      c) Working conditions
      d) Guest management and feedback (e.g. tell them to be sustainable while visiting?)
      e) Community collaborations
   13. What is the most important concern of sustainability in relation to your hotel?
   14. Do you know of The Seychelles Sustainable Tourism Label or other forms of eco-certification?
   15. Would you consider joining an eco-certification in the future? If yes, why? If not, why not?
   16. What do you think of using a certification (Eco label) as an approach towards sustainability?
   17. How will your business develop in the next ten years?
   18. Do you feel that the state of the environment will impact on the future growth of the tourism industry in Seychelles?