



SEYCHELLES ECOTOURISM STRATEGY
FOR THE 21ST CENTURY
SETS 21

Ecotourism and Community Benefits

“ANSANM POUR LANMOUR SESEL”

ECOTOURISM PILOT PROJECTS FOR THE
ANSE ROYALE DISTRICT

PP33

OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT

Republic of Seychelles



MEMO

From: SA

To: VP

Date: 10 January 2007

Subject: **Ref: Plans and Targets (2006-2009)**
Ecotourism and Community benefits
Pilots projects for the Anse Royale district (PP33)

VP it will be recalled that for my plans and targets I submitted 30 possible pilots projects for consideration by the Government and all others concerned before we start drafting them.

In order for the batch of Projects to sound more appealing, I have decided to add another three important ones to make it 33:-

They are:

1. Creation of an Eco-trail in Fairyland
2. Declaration of the Alibhaye Ibrahim Shop as a District Monument
3. The training of the Eco-militia

I do hope that my (our) efforts are having the consideration they deserve for us to move ahead as soon as possible. As we discussed early this year with your consent I intend to focus a major part of my attention on, “kick starting” them. This is my favourite baby... it must continue to grown.

We do need all the support possible...!

We shall discuss which ones to keep confidential – format charge before setting “the TIMING” for release.

Many thanks.

SA/10/01/2007

OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT

Republic of Seychelles



MEMO

From: SA

To: VP

Date: 9 October 2006

Subject: **Plans and Targets for the Year 2006 – 2009**
Ecotourism and Community Benefits

In addition to what I am doing/performing already as Special Advisor, with your consent my focus for the next three years will particularly be on “Ecotourism and Community Benefits”.

Such a focus is very much in line with the WTO Theme of “Tourism Enriches” for the Tourism Day on 27th September 2006.

With such a theme, money can be obtained/garnered from WTO, NAM, IOC, GEF, World Bank, BADEA, ADB, FAO, UNDP, UNFPA, National Geography, World Conservation Union, Cousteau Society, Bill Gates Fund, Conservation Entities, IUCN, Sierra Club, Bilateral Sources and the endless many others.

The time for us to move faster on this particular issue is now. Thus in order for the strategy to work and be profitable, the Vice President’s Office must be directly in charge.

I have no doubt that I (we) can count on your total support. Hope my Plans and Targets can be useful. We shall discuss.

SA/09/10/2006

SEYCHELLES ECOTOURISM STRATEGY FOR THE 21ST CENTURY (SETS 21)

ECOTOURISM PILOT PROJECTS FOR THE ANSE ROYALE DISTRICT

PP33

IMPLEMENTATION

On 27th September 2003 (Tourism Day) the first Seychelles Ecotourism Strategy (SETS 21) was launched by Ms Simone de Comarmond at Anse Royale.

The strategy itself calls for the establishment of a Multi-Stake Holder Committee to ensure the effective implementation of the various envisaged projects.

Soon after its launch the National Ecotourism Committee (NEC) met twice.

In April 2005 the portfolio responsibility for Ecotourism was transferred to STMA/STB and since then it has not met nor has there been any tangible follow action.

In the meantime we continue to talk loud about Ecotourism in Seychelles in our promotional efforts and in our marketing strategy without paying much attention to the enhancement of our overall Ecotourism product itself.

However it could be argued that in view of the many changes taking place in the tourism industry over the last two years or so there were many priorities (and still are) that had to be addressed first.

In my modest view therefore, the time is now ripe for us to reactivate the process, in enabling the Ecotourism Niche to develop hand in hand with the prevailing overall tourism product development and also in line with the socio-economic development taking place.

In so doing we will be able to enrich the tourism industry itself further and in the process provide more Community Benefits for all.

As you know since I am a firm believer in Ecotourism and Community Benefits I am ready and willing to provide whatever possible assistance in this regard.

Indeed in his interview with Isola Bella of September 2006 entitled "*My Priority Is To Speed Up Development In The District*" President James Alix Michel said and I quote:-

"More of our people have been introduced to entrepreneurship, and I expect that in the next few years we will have a bigger pool of successful businessmen in small, medium and big industries, as well as cottage industry. I want our people to participate directly in wealth-generating activities and, at the same time, benefit from a share of the profits. I want the Seychellois to be a nation of share-holders".

The activities/projects we are undertaking in the Anse Royale district fall very much in line with the Government's Vision for all the districts.

The Anse Royale Ecotourism Committee

Since the official launch of the Anse Royale Ecotourism Committee by yourself on the 17th January 2004, the Committee has met a number of times, our discussions have been fruitful and action has already been taken here and there.

Action already taken:

- (1) The creation of a Public Beach Park
- (2) The designation of an area as a second phase to create a Leisure Park

These are two major projects that will benefit not only the Anse Royale community but the whole of Seychelles and our cherished visitors alike.

People all over will be making use of such facilities and the Leisure Park itself will be a centre for relaxation, businesses, cultural event, shops, banks, you name it...you have it.

For Anse Royale to translate into a viable Ecotourism district, there is still much more to be done to implement as many pilot projects, which will set an example of all the districts in Seychelles to follow.

During the Anse Royale Ecotourism Committee's discussions several possible projects were discussed and agreed upon for eventual presentation to the Government, the Private Sector, the NGO's, Civil Society and the Community (national/regional and global) as a whole.

Amongst many possible others, they include:-

- (a) Once the Police is relocated at the Les Canelles Road, to turn the old Police Station (which in itself must be preserved) into a Plantation Museum, 'Musée de Plantation' so as to retrace the history of the district.
- (b) To enhance the garden in front of the old station and to turn it into an area where people can have tea, coffee, snacks, lunch etc. etc and buy quality souvenirs, with various shows, fashion shows and performances. The best part of Anse Royale beach is right behind the station.
- (c) To renovate and/or rebuild the old colonial homes/houses; and monuments of history such as "basin cheval". To open them as history museums.
- (d) To enhance and maintain the four cemeteries as an added value product.
- (e) The farm land that is located behind the community centre on the way to Les Canelles must be turned into an organic entity. Organic food is a fast growing and profitable venture and it falls very much in line with our 5 Star status and Ecotourism in general. Even Walmart, the largest shopping-supermarket chain in the world is going organic.

- (f) To maintain and enhance the existing nature trails and to create new ones. One in particular will be up to Cap Bonm Jean. In the process to recreate an area for Medicinal Plants in memory of Charles Zialor, one of our Most Famous Herbalists.
- (g) To enhance the landscaping of the district in giving it a feel of the days gone by. Mature coconut trees, nutmegs, vanilla and cinnamon, fruit trees such as mangoes, paw-paw, bananas etc must be replanted, all along the main roads be it to Les Canelles, Bougainville, Sweet Escott and to Victoria.
- (h) (i) To reserve a sizeable area in full view of the Sweet Escott road and/or bordering the trail of the Sweet Escott Wetlands to create the Plantation atmosphere of the days gone by. There will be the need to chain link fence the area, plant mature coconut trees, fruits trees and have a few cows, goats, sheep grazing under it. It could also include fowls, birds and the many possible others.

We may also decide to keep the cows where they are ... reduce the space they occupy for other projects to develop on ... less hassle.

- (ii) An adjacent area to be allocated/reserved for Seychelles reptiles such as tortoises, lizards, skincks etc. etc.
- (iii) The bird area should include all of our endemic birds for people to see, to appreciate and to enjoy
- (i) To enhance and maintain the Sweet Escott wetlands i.e. from the Catholic Church via the historically famous “Pont Naise” until the bridge next to the old market place. A trail where people can walk, bike, cycle and/or skate while enjoying the flora and fauna, must be created all along the way.
- (j) The area of the marsh i.e. from the Les Canelles to the Dine family Sweet Escott (where a good number of coco-de-mer trees grow very well) and up to the dump site on the Les Canelles road itself should not be reclaimed for it will cause much flooding. I grew up there and I know it very well.
- (k) Instead it should be enhanced to its original status and dikes (dykes) must be built so as to drain the area while keeping it moist. This area has the perfect condition to grow “tropicals”. It can therefore be made to grow “tropicals” ... such long lasting elegant flowers, so as to not only cater for the increasing local demand but above all for export. Indeed two normal/ ordinary (nothing extravagant) “lobster claws” at Harrod’s of London cost £12-15. One can only imagine what the “big ones” will cost. It will be a quick, low investment and highly profitable way to earn much needed foreign exchange for Seychelles while providing much more Community Benefits.

Such flowers will be marketed under the name SEYCHELLES’ TROPICALS. It will turn into a Tourism Marketing Tool of immense proportions.

The next phase of this project will be to make available such plants to the community at large for propagation, landscape, beauty and above all for Export. Commercial collection centres can then be created in all the districts. In the meantime, they can start growing more of the varieties they already have for the local market.

- (l) The Polytechnic Auditorium must be made maximum use of for cultural events, meetings and conferences.
- (m) The district administration building, the ‘common area’ of which has relatively good acoustics must be made full use of for social activities, dances, performances, etc.
- (n) The churches need to be renovated and be turned into “commercial entities” similar to the Vatican; Notre Dame, Sacré Coeur in Paris, St Paul’s Cathedral in London, St Patrick in New York. (They are only but a few of my favourites). While we must never try to buy our way to Heaven, we must always praise the Lord for all the blessing we have. In return we should contribute a “little” to maintain our house(s) of worship. If the world as whole does it, we should not be the exception.

In this vein the little chapel at “Ra Ra” having a “wishing well” can be made to replicate Lourdes.

- (o) N.B. The following may not sound too eco-friendly but it could help to arouse attention as to what can be done to preserve it.
 - (i) The Sweet Escott road itself i.e. from the Catholic Church to the Les Canelles junction could be turned into a street full of activities featuring restaurants of as many nationalities as possible, bars, dance clubs, internet cafes, pool tables, casinos, etc, of as many nationalities and tastes.
 - (ii) Bars like in New Orleans, Louisiana where you can put one’s drink in a plastic cup and move from one bar to another (in the evening) without any restrictions could be created. Similar ideas from George Town in Washington DC can also become useful. Epaneama, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil has created such a work of Art around the lake in the Epaneama district. Seychelles has the same climate as Brazil (on the coast), and with Mahé having similar topography to Rio de Janeiro, we can also do it.
 - (iii) Cultural shows and other social events organised as frequently as possible, both for the locals and the upcoming quality tourism trade in the south “Au Vent”.
 - (iv) The buildings themselves must be made to create a High Value Colonial Atmosphere where people can live upstairs and work downstairs. They should be built in such a way that they can be rented out/or sold as Luxury Entities should this project fail to materialise...which I doubt very much.
- (p) To eradicate once and for all – all the invasive species in the district...! We need to leave the Cinnamon alone..!
- (q) To keep all the rivers clean and free of invasive plants.
- (r) To build toilets and shower facilities all along the beach for when it is time to go to the bathroom one cannot travel very far to deposit his/her “loot”.

- (s) The local community needs to be trained on the benefits of Quality Ecotourism. They must be made to produce arts and crafts of quality, exquisite Creole food, cooking and trained in public relations so as to welcome our cherished visitors to the district with open arms.
- (t) Signs everywhere in the district featuring “Ecotourism Projects in the Making” needs to be installed so as to attract donors, adoption, financial and moral support.
- (u) As for the pretty Anse Royale lagoon itself, there should be as many activities as possible.
 - (i) The idea to build a Jetty (colonial architecture) to welcome yachts and for fishing boats is both timely and necessary.
 - (ii) Pirogues for “catch and release” in the lagoon is a must.
 - (iii) Commercial fishing in the lagoon itself must be strictly controlled.
 - (iv) Diving, snorkelling, glass bottom boat facilities have to be installed.
 - (v) Big game fishing with Anse Royale as a centre base to be undertaken.
- (v) The dump site once filled to the brim, must be turned into a park with benches and recreational facilities.
- (w) **Question of “Chez l’Habitant”**

The question of Chez l’Habitant as stipulated in paragraph 4.3 of the Ecotourism strategy is still on my “Radar Screen”.

In view of the prevailing foreign exchange situation, the time for Anse Royale to implement this project is not now. However as scarcity of land to build hotels, guesthouses and villas is already a fact to reckon with, eventually we will have to revert to the question of Chez l’Habitant to consider giving due consideration to accommodating our cherished visitors. There is a lot to be done to prepare ourselves to implement this necessary but equally Complex issue.

One possible way to start it is strongly suggested that we let “bygones be bygones” and in a sign of good faith give licenses to Gilles Nageon de Lestang and Perry Mancienne / D’offay to operate their entities as Ecotourism Entities. We also need to start setting criteria for Ecotourism Establishments. (Gilles Nageon de Lestang has already been issued his licence).

Observation

If we do not give Gilles and Perry a licence, they will continue to operate illegally. We give it to them we can at least monitor their operations and in the process make some money out of licenses, etc. etc. Both Gilles Nageon de Lestang and Perry Mancienne are active members of the Anse Royale Ecotourism Committee.

Le Jardin Du Roi and Les Canelles Nursery ONE are already two existing and thriving Ecotourism products.

All these proposals can be considered as being part of the overall tourism development in the South whereby creating a centre where our visitors can relax, shop, exercise, be entertained and appreciate the Seychelles hospitality.

- (x) It is my intention to open Les Canelles Nursery ONE to visitors (both local and foreign) at around July, August 2007.

It will be a place where they can enjoy the many varieties of tropicals and buy such flowers to take home.

My intention is to also have an authentic colourful Creole Restaurant in the garden. A souvenir shop with high quality products and an internet café will also be featured. Another phase of the development will be mineral water production marketed under the brand name of “DELO ROYAL”.

- (y) Les Canelles Nursery TWO. This one hectare of relatively flat land which I bought partly from the money I made from Les Canelles ONE over the last six years is located higher up behind the Mental Hospital is coming up nicely and will start bearing fruits by mid-2007. At the end of 2007 beginning of 2008 it will also be open to the public particularly during Caladium Season. It will be a different concept from Les Canelles Nursery ONE.

Les Canelles TWO will grow organic fruits and vegetables and of course flowers/tropicals to satisfy the local market. Flowers at Les Canelles ONE will be primarily for SHOW and for visitors to take home.

For information I have another two projects in line in another district to grow tropical flowers for sale at the International Airport. José Marti International Airport sells three “big” roses in a plastic tube with ribbons for US\$15, Pointe Larue International Airport is one of the few Airports in the Tropics which does not have flowers for sale. It is a “shame”.

- (i) “Fairyland, Fairyland, Fairyland” The one and only. Most of us who are now in our late summer, autumn and winter years, our lives have been associated with the romantic atmosphere of Unique Fairyland. To build a hotel there will serve no other purpose but to loose it “intriguing” qualities and exceptional beauty.

In my view it should be preserved for future generations. To do so a nature romantic trail with recreational facilities can be created for the locals and the visitors alike.

- (ii) The Alibhaye Ibrahim shop next to the Catholic Church has more or less preserved its original identity. As such it should be declare a District Monument in ensuring its preservation for future generations.

(iii) Last but not least but most important.

In ensuring that the Eco-trail is made to be a safe and secure venture, the need to provide security and peace all over the district is a must.

As such there is the need to start addressing the issue of training of the Eco-Militia(s) without which such noble endeavours will be fruitless.

(z) Creating an Eco-Trail in Anse Royale will also provide much relaxation to our own people in dispelling the prevailing view that all the beaches are being taken away from them. It will be a booster for Our Visible Good Intentions. That we care very much about their enjoyment and standard of living.

This year's WTO theme is "Tourism Enriches". The need for us to enrich further the industry itself so as to bring still more Community Benefits is a necessity.

Anse Royale must continue to set the example. ONCE THE APPROVAL IS GIVEN for the above mentioned possible projects we should move forward as fast as we can for their implementation i.e.

Visitors will be able to hire bicycles and/or golf carts to move with a map of the district depicting the Eco-Trail, various sites, attractions, activities pick and choose whatever they want to see or whatever they would like to do for the day, for the week and/or for the month.

In the process many jobs will be created and our people will feel happy that they have a history, a culture and a tradition that they can relate to.

Anse Royale is still relatively Virgin Territory in Seychelles and in its development we must ensure that it is done in an Eco-Friendly Manner with particular emphasis on Community Benefits.

(z1) **Conclusion**

Over the past two years the development of Ecotourism product in the Anse Royale district has been slow. This has been primarily due to limited financial and human resources.

The need for us to move faster before the issue of Ecotourism on the International Arena fades away is now. We must therefore also address our related limitations in this field.

As such there is the need for us to formulate the proposals in an acceptable International Format. The batch of 33 possible projects can subsequently be presented "As A Whole" to potential donors/financiers on a local, regional, global, both on a bilateral and multilateral basis.

The local business community/private sector can also be requested to "chip" in and to adopt projects.

But for us to move fast, we must appoint a coordinator(s) to develop the various proposal, projects, and to assess their viability.

- (z2) It is also my intention to create an NGO named, The Ecotourism Society of Seychelles “TESS” so as to interact with all possible international NGOs/partners. As said when the financing/adoption of any of the projects is garnered, other projects will be formulated and instituted so as to keep the number PP33 projects active.

Indeed Local Government and the District Administration by themselves will be unable to attend to such issues discussed and many others to come. The DA is already saturated with housing, water, electricity problems and the many other socio-political issues.

- (z3) As such the responsibility to draft such projects should be allocated to the Department of Transport and Tourism to be undertaken by Mr Micheal Nalletamby and Dr Frauke Dogley.
- (z4) Mr Terry Jones one of the main Architects of Vision 21 and the Ecotourism Strategy itself left Seychelles at the time when “hope” was at its lowest level. With your consent I intend to ask him to come back and give a hand. He still has his house at Beolière.
- (z5) Since it is our intention to turn Anse Royale into a second city/town we must recognise the need to in the process appoint an effective Mayor. To ensure continuity for a long period. A lower, “middle age” very able person should be appointed (not me...!).
- (z6) The Multi-Stake Holders Ecotourism Committee must also enhance its ability to deliver more and on target. It is my intention to appoint ten of its members to also sit on the Board of The Ecotourism Society of Seychelles (TESS).

Members of the Anse Royale Ecotourism Committee are:

<i>Mrs. Sylvanne Lemiel</i>	<i>DA - Anse Royale</i>	<i>Chairman</i>
<i>Dr. Frauke Dogley</i>	<i>Ministry of Tourism & Transport</i>	<i>Co-Chairman</i>
<i>Mr. Marc Marengo</i>	<i>Special Advisor VPO - Stakeholder</i>	<i>Secretary</i>
<i>Mr. Alain de Comarmond</i>	<i>Ministry of Evnt. & Natural Resources</i>	<i>Member</i>
<i>Ms. Rebecca Loustau-Lalanne</i>	<i>Ministry of Evnt. & Natural Resources</i>	<i>Member</i>
<i>Ms. Yvette Cafrine</i>	<i>Ministry of Land Use & Habitat</i>	<i>Member</i>
<i>Mr. Selby Pillay</i>	<i>Ministry of Foreign Affairs</i>	<i>Member</i>
<i>Mr. Jean-François Figaro</i>	<i>Chairman YAT</i>	<i>Member</i>
<i>Mrs. June Naiken</i>	<i>Chairman Twazyenm Az Anse Royale</i>	<i>Member</i>
<i>Ms. Peggy Agathine</i>	<i>Polytechnic</i>	<i>Member</i>
<i>Mr. Jacques Rampal</i>	<i>Tourist Guide - Stakeholder</i>	<i>Member</i>
<i>Mr. Serge Robert</i>	<i>Masons Travel - Stakeholder</i>	<i>Member</i>
<i>Mr. France Frichot</i>	<i>Stakeholder</i>	<i>Member</i>
<i>Mr. Gilles Nageon de Lestang</i>	<i>Stakeholder</i>	<i>Member</i>
<i>Mrs. Micheline Georges</i>	<i>Jardin du Roi - Stakeholder</i>	<i>Member</i>
<i>Mr. Marc de Silva</i>	<i>Taxi Business - Stakeholder</i>	<i>Member</i>
<i>Mr. Albert Payet</i>	<i>Stakeholder</i>	<i>Member</i>
<i>Mr. Alex Marie</i>	<i>Stakeholder</i>	<i>Member</i>
<i>Mr. Marc Uzice</i>	<i>Stakeholder</i>	<i>Member</i>
<i>Mrs. Mariette Esparon</i>	<i>Stakeholder</i>	<i>Member</i>
<i>Mr. Perry Mancienne</i>	<i>Stakeholder</i>	<i>Member</i>

- (z7) Please note that some above mentioned ideas are the results of the work done so far by the Anse Royale Ecotourism Committee. In my view, it is a must that all intended developments in the district should be done with the contribution of the Anse Royale Ecotourism Committee in their formulation stages.

Some are my personal ideas/the Vision I have for the sustainable future for my district, my birth place (born and partly raised), my people and for my country. THE ONE, THE ONLY SEYCHELLES, which I LOVE so very much.

Final Note

At first glance a small number of the ideas mentioned may seem “far fetched” and unattainable, but for now at least they are on paper. Nothing is impossible in this volatile and highly turbulent world of ours. **THUS LET US ADAPT...!**

Marc MRM Marengo
Ambassador
Special Advisor

10th January 2007