MAKING MAURITIUS A LEADING AND SUSTAINABLE ISLAND DESTINATION
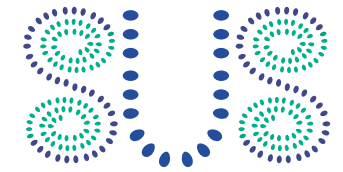
SUS ISLAND
Sustainable Tourism
MAURITIUS

switchafrica GREEN

Associated partners:
- Ministry of Tourism (MoT)
- Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority (MTPA)
- Tourism Promotion Association (TPA)
- Association of Inbound Operators Mauritius (AIOM)
- Association des hotels de Charme
- Association of Tourist Operators (ATO)
- Association of Tourism Professionals c/o Great Delight
- Ile aux Cerfs Based Pleasure Craft Association
- DER Touristik Deutschland GmbH

Improving Sustainable Tourism in Mauritius through Greening the Value Chain of Tour Operators (SUS-ISLAND) is a Switch Africa grant project funded by the European Commission and led by Mauritius Tourism Authority. Its objective is to promote sustainable tourism in Mauritius by demonstrating and scaling up a self-sustaining mechanism for improving sustainability impacts along the value chain and improving awareness and market of sustainable tourism products.
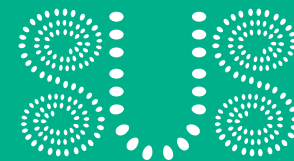
Do you want to know how your tourism business can **deliver higher value to customers at a lower footprint**? That's what the SUS-ISLAND project is about.

SUS-ISLAND project combines local partners and international best practices for an approach to add value with sustainable tourism. This brochure is aimed at all small and medium tourism enterprises to introduce you to the project and how to get involved and find out more.

What's in the Brochure

Mauritius – island of tourism

Tourism is one of the key pillars of the Mauritian economy. The development of tourism which started in the early 1950s with approximately 1550 visitors, has been accelerating over the years to today's 1.4 Million and is a powerful engine of growth for investment, entrepreneurship, wealth and job creation.

- Tourism industry directly creates 1 in every 10 jobs in Mauritius, and it contributes 8 % to the total GDP.

- Mauritius has a population of 1.26 million. Tourist arrivals increased steadily from 74,597 in 1975 to 1,341,860 in 2017, and the government vision is to increase this number to 2 million by 2030.

1.26 Million inhabitants

1.3 Million tourists per year

2 Million tourists per year expected by 2030

- The average expenditure per tourist/day v.s. the tourist arrival growth is shown as below (2013 – 2017):

16% Growth of Expenditure per Tourist

2013 2017

35% Growth of Number of Tourists

2013 2017

1 Vision

The Mauritius Tourism Strategic Plan 2018 – 2021 sets the vision that Mauritius becomes "A leading and sustainable island destination". To achieve the vision 7 missions are defined, and 4 of them target improving sustainability and innovation of the tourism industry:

- To broaden the tourism product portfolio to include eco-tourism, spa and wellness tourism, cruise tourism, cultural tourism, business tourism and sporting events;
- To promote skill-intensive and technology-driven tourism enterprise capable of providing innovative services;
- To foster the development of an integrated, high-tech and innovative tourism industry;
- To mainstream sustainable practices in tourism development.

"The Tourism Strategic Plan focuses on an entrepreneurial and innovation-led model of tourism developments, harnessing more on intangible assets such as knowledge and business ideas, innovation, creativity, technology, appropriate skills and effectiveness among support institutions. Business charting their future plans on innovation and market-driven practices will better adapt to the ever-changing global tourism environment and will gain a competitive edge." (Ministry of Tourism Mauritius 2018)

SUS-ISLAND project led by Mauritius Tourism Authority (MTA) aims to contribute to the vision of developing a sustainable island and green destination with tourism innovation that

- Exceeds customer expectations and demand
- Improves positive sustainability impacts (handprint.) and/or lowers negative sustainability impacts (footprint).

Increasing positive impacts
- Social wellbeing
- Community development
- Responsible sourcing
- Cultural Preservation
- Ecosystems quality
- Authentic experience
- Sustainability awareness
- …

Reducing negative impacts
- Resource overuse
- Emissions
- Waste generation
- Water
- Social consequences
- …

2 Sustainable tourism challenges

Challenges faced by the tourism industry
Despite the success story of the tourist industry, sustainable tourism development still faces various challenges:

Mauritius tourism industry context
1 | Low unit revenue: The average expenditure per tourist continues to remain low. Tourist spends outside accommodation is growing very slowly.
2 | Dependence on import: Mauritius is increasingly reliant on imported food, as indicated by the rising import-export gap.

3 | Shortage of skills: Tourism industry has to compete for qualified workers with other sectors such as the Business Process Outsourcing sector and recruiters from abroad, mainly the cruise industry.
4 | Transport: Motorisation rates increased to 385 vehicles per thousand people by 2016. Mauritius does not have any rail-based transport facility, but it is developing a mass transit system.
5 | Inclusive tourism development needed: Lack of community participation in tourism development have limited their growth potential and hindered their wellbeing.

18 Carbon offsetting scheme
19 Disruptive business
1 Low unit revenue
10 Waste management
2 Dependence on import
14 Energy usage
11 Plastic pollution
3 Shortage of skills
16 Authenticity needed
9 Biodiversity
15 Water supply
12 Food waste
4 Transport
17 Personalized experience needed
8 Coastal erosion
13 Wastewater treatment
6 Sea level rise
7 Coral reef health
5 Inclusive tourism development needed

Graphic (adapted): shutterstock / Darko 1981

4

Tourism resource at risks

6 | Sea level rise: Sea level is increasing at an average rate of 5.6 mm/yr. since 2013, much higher than the global average of 3.2 mm/yr. It could reduce tourism revenue by up to $50m a year by 2050.

7 | Coral reef health: The stock of live coral cover decreased from 49% in 2002 to 18% in 2014, and 40-50% is partially or totally bleached. Decreased corals and sea level rise worsen storm surges.

8 | Coastal erosion: 11% of Mauritius' coasts are eroded already, which is further accelerated by climate change, degradation of reefs, removal of seagrass etc.

9 | Biodiversity: Several species in Mauritius are threatened and endemic species may become extinct, due to invasive alien species, land conversion, habitat fragmentation, habitat modification etc.

Waste management

10 | Waste management: Solid waste landfilled increased by 8.4% in 2017. The Mare Chicose Landfill, which is the sole landfill on the island, is expected to reach saturation in 2019.

11 | Plastic pollution: The 3rd largest share of waste is plastic, and it creates significant threats to the fauna and flora. The heaviest plastic pollution was found in the areas of public beaches.

12 | Food waste: 5281 tons of food are wasted annually in Mauritius. An average hotel could save $7 for every $1 invested in reducing kitchen food waste.

13 | Wastewater treatment: About 26% of the population were connected to the public sewer system in 2016. About 60 large hotels located along the coastal zone possess their own wastewater treatment plant.

Resource use

14 | Energy usage: In 2015, around 84% of the total primary energy requirement for Mauritius was met from imported fossil fuel and the remaining from local renewable sources. The government targets at increasing renewable energy sources by 35% by 2025.

15 | Water supply: The Northern Aquifer is the main domestic water supply, but it is susceptible to over-exploitation, saltwater intrusion and pollution risks all these within the overarching impact of climate change.

Changing customer demand

16 | Authenticity needed: Travellers, millennials, in particular, prioritise authenticity in their travel experience - cultural appreciation, living like a local, independence and finding hidden gems, originality etc.

17 | Personalized experience needed: Travellers, especially the young generations, are expecting tailored content, services and experience.

Changing global context

18 | Carbon offsetting scheme: From 2021, the international flight will have to offset any extra emissions under a UN agreement.

19 | Disruptive business: Big brands (e.g. Google) and start-ups (e.g. Airbnb) will change both how the tourism products are supplied, booked and used.

"No other activity can match tourism for sustainability and resilience. Tourism as an industry must observe all best practices and standards for the protection of the environment. As people become increasingly aware of the devastation that climate change is causing in all parts of the world, tourism faces serious challenges. To meet the challenges, tourism must be environment and people friendly, sustainable, inclusive, ethical and responsible. Sustainable Tourism has no other option than to willingly embrace these elements."
(The Hon Minister of Tourism Anil Kumarsingh Gayan)

Photo by Amit Mehra

3
Pro-handprint innovation process as an approach to achieving this vision

Considering the importance of tourism development for Mauritius and challenges confronted, sustainable innovation is needed to improve the positive impacts of tourism while lowering the negative impacts of tourism on the environment, society and culture. Against this background, MTA and the Collaborating Centre on Sustainable Consumption and Production (CSCP) developed the SUS-ISLAND project, which is funded by the European Commission as part of the Switch Africa programme. Jointly with the committed stakeholders, SUS-ISLAND project is designed to foster pro-handprint innovation in Mauritius tourism industry, which supports to mainstream sustainable tourism for the mass market.

"Hoteliers have realised that the competitiveness and sustainability of the tourism industry go hand-in-hand as the quality of tourist destinations is strongly influenced by their natural and cultural environment and their integration into the local community. One can achieve sustainable tourism without compromising on the level of service. Sustainable tourism practices can be implemented while maintaining a high level of tourist satisfaction and ensuring a meaningful experience to tourists, raising their awareness about sustainability issues and promoting sustainable tourism practices." (AHRIM 2017)

3.1
What do we mean by pro-handprint innovation?

Tourism activities create both negative and positive impacts. While most people are familiar with the idea of a footprint that describes negative and undesired sustainability impacts (e.g. energy and water usage, waste generation, community overload etc.), handprint is the concept to describe the positive and value-adding impacts of products and services (e.g. local community prosperity, culture and nature preservation, customers' awareness etc.).

1) The GSTC Criteria (www.gstcouncil.org/gstc-criteria) serve as the global baseline standards for sustainability in travel and tourism.

Pro-handprint innovation approach guides business to develop or improve products and services, aiming to add value to satisfying customers' demand (e.g. authenticity, relaxation) while addressing the sustainability risks and opportunities.

Based on the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC)[1] and other international standards with input from the stakeholders, SUS-ISLAND has defined the pro-handprint innovation criteria on Page 8 as sustainable innovation ingredients. It covers both the handprint and footprint dimensions.

Hand or Foot?

Three cases of positive sustainability impacts and their imprint

Creating, proliferating or safeguarding something that is generally desirable (e.g. biodiversity, community prosperity, peace, job creation etc.)

Reducing the negative impact of another (e.g. cleaning the waste on the beach)

Reducing our own negative impact (e.g. reducing the energy consumption or resource use from the business)

Delivering more value

Customer   Destination

Environment   Community

With a reduced footprint

Customer	
Product attractiveness	Product innovativeness, Tourism asset preservation, Improving cleanliness
Quality	Community co-development, Authentic experience, Safety and health, Customer satisfaction
Customer awareness	Information provision and interpretation to customers
Destination	
Community development	Community support, Local and sustainable sourcing, Local entrepreneurs
Employment	Local employment, Decent work and employee satisfaction
Preservation of culture and nature	Biodiversity conservation, Culture preservation
Environment	
Resource use	Direct energy use, Direct water usage
Pollution and emission	Solid waste and harmful substances, Wastewater, Other pollution
Biodiversity and habitat risks	Biodiversity threat, Natural sites and wildlife interactions, Wildlife harvesting and trade, Animal welfare
Community	
Community overload	Community services, livelihoods and infrastructure

"In order to be sustainable, inclusive and responsible, tourism must respect the environment, engage with the local communities, preserve local customs and cultural heritage. When everyone is on board, everyone not only protects tourism but defends it. Tourism is an activity which bonds people despite differences and origins. Tourism is for everyone and, unlike other industries, tourism preserves to produce, innovate and create."
(The Hon Minister of Tourism Anil Kumarsingh Gayan)

3.2
What are the good practices of pro-handprint innovation?

Pro-handprint innovations are products and services that drive value creation for the company and the mass market by including sustainability as an innovation ingredient.

On the next pages, you will some pro-handprint innovations examples illustrating some of the many potential answers to these challenges.

Each example describes the product or service, lists the customer demands it covers and what challenges are addressed with it. The local and customer benefits are also described as well as relevant Sustainable Development Goals. The key learnings provide the success factors to explore how you can create your own pro-handprint products.

How might we ...

Let's take a moment to imagine what pro-handprint ideas you could create as a tourism business and consider the following innovation challenges?

- How might we **improve comfort for customers** while **lowering emissions**?

- How might we **provide quality food to customers** while **preserving indigenous agricultural species**?

- How might we **help tourists to experience as locals** while **empowering local youth to become skilled future tourism professionals**?

- How might we **help female travellers feel safer** while **creating local jobs**?

- How might we **offer an unforgettable gastronomical experience** while **supporting local entrepreneurs**?

Now get inspired by browsing the examples on Page 10 to Page 14.

Photo by Yannick Apollon on Unsplash

Source: BARCOSOLAR, 2018

Product/Service

Comfortable cruise experience with solar boat

Solar catamaran and service from BARCOSOLAR

- Develop and promote solar catamaran that enable quality and eco-friendly experience without emission
- Support on raising consumer awareness

Benefits

- No cost of fuel
- Saving 15kg of CO_2 emission every hour
- No risk of oil or fuel spillage

- No noise nor the smell of fuel for customers

SDGs

| 9 INDUSTRIE, INNOVATION UND INFRASTRUKTUR | 13 MASSNAHMEN ZUM KLIMASCHUTZ | 14 LEBEN UNTER WASSER | 17 PARTNER-SCHAFTEN ZUR ERREICHUNG DER ZIELE |

Customer Demands

- Enjoy the cruise comfortably
- Reduce the risk of getting sea sickness

Challenge

- Water activities are creating pollution due to oil spillage and emission

Key learning for improving positive impact of tourism

- Look for sustainable energy source (solar panel) to power your product
- Think about what the targeted users' core needs are (comfortable cruise in this case) and highlight how your product addresses the needs in your communication and marketing

Source: TUI Care Foundation 2018

Product/Service
Sustainable local wine and olive oil for foodies

Taste Crete Project from TUI Care Foundation

- Empower local farmers to incorporate sustainable management practices for cultivation and processing
- Foster long-term cooperation between hotels and farmers
- Develop excursions to the local farms

Benefits

- Indigenous variety of grapes and olives preserved
- A closer link between the tourists and local communities
- More sustainable farming practices promoted with stronger market pull
- Improved proudness and income of the local farmers

- Customers enjoying higher quality and organic local products
- Customers feeling better connected to the local communities through a visit to the winery and the olive mill with wine & olive Oil tasting

SDGs

Customer Demands

- High quality and healthy food with good variety
- More transparency on the food consumed
- Authentic experience

Challenge

- Intensive farming with negative environmental and social sustainabilty impact
- Indigenous wine and olive species endangered
- Farmers with limited channel to sell products to tourists

Key learning for improving positive impact of tourism

- Identify and prioritize the indigenous products that hold high potential to provide authentic food experience
- Provide a framework for mutually-beneficial cooperation between different local actors
- Create and test interactive excursion with a network of frequent visitors before launching them for the mass market

Source: Planterra 2015

Product/Service

Unique bike tour guided by local students in Caye Caulker

Bike with Purpose project from Planeterra Foundation

- Fund bicycles and other materials to develop a student-led bicycle tour for tourist
- Train the students on nature conservation ledge
- Support the education of the youth on tuition fee

Benefits

- Increased number of students who can afford education thanks to the social enterprise revenue
- Students with more experiential learning and practical training on tourism and conservation science
- Youth with better skills for future employment opportunities

- Seeing the island through the eyes of a local
- Unique experience with the knowledgeable young citizen

SDGs

| 4 HOCHWERTIGE BILDUNG | 8 MENSCHENWÜRDIGE ARBEIT UND WIRTSCHAFTS-WACHSTUM | 11 NACHHALTIGE STÄDTE UND GEMEINDEN | 12 NACHHALTIGE/R KONSUM UND PRODUKTION |

Customer Demands

- Explore like a local
- Discover the hidden gem

Challenge

- High dropout rates in school and youth unemployment
- Lack of hands-on tourism education
- Nature resource conservation needed

Key learning for improving positive impact of tourism

- Identify the potential value or talent of the vulnerable groups (the youth seeking for practical tourism education) for addressing related customer demands (learning)
- Empower the vulnerable group to provide quality products/service for addressing the targeted customer demand
- Team up with the social enterprenures or local foundations to scale up the product to the mass market

Source: Planterra 2015

Product/Service
Taxi for women by women in New Delhi

Women on Wheels project from Planeterra Foundation

- Organize taxi for women by women in New Delhi
- Train female drivers on driving skills, communication skills, self-defence issues, gender issues

Benefits

- Great sense of pride for the female drivers
- Women are empowered to support their families' income
- Turning New Delhi into a safer capital for women
- Reducing public violence and gender discrimination

- Customers feeling safer
- Customers getting better transportation service
- The customers have the chance of developing a closer connection with local communities

SDGs

Customer Demands

- Safely get to their destinations
- Enjoy the trip

Challenge

- New Delhi perceived as unsafe city for women due to sexual harassment
- Little job opportunities for women with little education

Key learning for improving positive impact of tourism

- Identify the unique value or talent of the vulnerable groups (the disadvantaged women in this case) for addressing related customer demands (safety for female travellers in New Delhi)
- Empower the vulnerable group to provide quality products/service for addressing the targeted customer demand
- Team up with the social enterprenures or local foundations to scale up the product to the mass market

Source: Wikimedia/Michal Osmenda

Product/Service

Night food tour & wine tasting for hidden gem seekers

Tour by Greeking.me in Greece

- Guide the tourists to enjoy idyllic night views, explore "secret", local sites, culture and cuisine in the evenings
- Personalize the experience to tucked-away eateries with foodie-expert
- Guide to learn and taste different indigenous Greek wine varieties paired with selected local cuisine.

Benefits

- Increasing visitors' flow to small, family restaurants and taverns which otherwise would stay unnoticed by the tourists
- Making tourists aware of the richness of local heritage and necessity of preserving it
- Creating jobs for locals, e.g. as guides, sight managers

- Customers experiencing unique cuisine with informed, local guides
- Customers with better connection to local culture and communities

SDGs

8 MENSCHENWÜRDIGE ARBEIT UND WIRTSCHAFTSWACHSTUM

11 NACHHALTIGE STÄDTE UND GEMEINDEN

12 NACHHALTIGE/R KONSUM UND PRODUKTION

Customer Demands

- Enjoy the local food and an unforgettable gastronomical experience
- Explore the city, including attractions, culture and history
- Authentic and personalized experience

Challenge

- Ever-growing problem of over-tourism
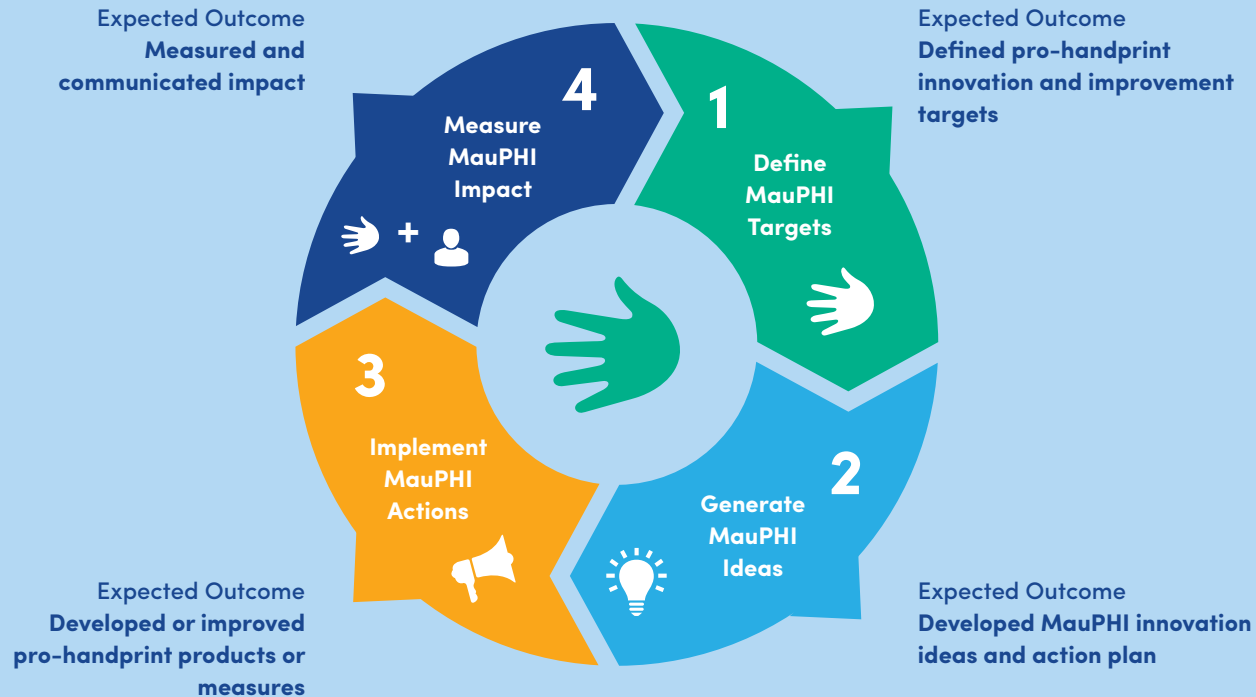- Increasing distance between tourists and locals

Key learning for improving positive impact of tourism

- Organize small groups: local guides might adjust their tours, taking into consideration preferences (vegetarian food or desire to see a particular sight) of their guests what makes the experience even more enjoyable
- It's key to have a knowledgeable, friendly, considerate guide that's passionate about the local culture and history.
- Create tours for specific needs: elderly people, people with different abilities. Offer nanny services for families with children (e.g. parents who want to get a night off)

3.3
How can pro-handprint innovation be achieved?

SUS-ISLAND has the vision of bringing sustainable tourism to the mass market, which creates value for the company and customers by integrating sustainability as an innovation ingredient. To achieve this, SUS-ISLAND will apply the Mauritius Pro-Handprint Innovation (MauPHI) Framework, which is a tool guiding business to target, manage, measure and communicate the positive impacts of tourism along the value chain.

Expected Outcome
Measured and communicated impact

Expected Outcome
Defined pro-handprint innovation and improvement targets

4 Measure MauPHI Impact

1 Define MauPHI Targets

3 Implement MauPHI Actions

2 Generate MauPHI Ideas

Expected Outcome
Developed or improved pro-handprint products or measures

Expected Outcome
Developed MauPHI innovation ideas and action plan

How you can get involved

Do you want to know how your tourism business can deliver higher value to customers at a lower footprint?
SUS-ISLAND promotes sustainable tourism innovation for:

- Tour operators / Destination management companies
- Hotels
- Taxi drivers and/or tour guides
- Handicraft makers
- Pleasure craft operators

For more info, contact Daren Moodely:
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Or learn more about the project from the website:
SUS-ISLAND.com

Stay updated on the project by following us on social media:

🐦 @SUS_ISLAND

f Facebook: @SUS-ISLAND

Join the SUS-ISLAND Network to

- Learn how to **make your current tourism offer more sustainable and profitable**
- Learn how to **develop and refine your products with better positive impacts** on the society, environment, culture and economy
- Learn how to better **market and communicate on your sustainable actions and products**
- Learn how you can **join the project trainings and good practice showcase events**
- Learn how you can **apply for our award with your sustainable tourism products or ideas**
- **Share your best practices** and be featured in the network communication

Membership in the network is free and you will receive the network newsletter with information on the network and its activities.

SIGN UP HERE