

Hotel L'Archipel on Praslin has introduced a food waste management programme to complement its existing good sustainability practice in power generation and eco-friendly cleaning systems.

The programme falls under the 'Don't Waste, Eat' initiative, launched last year to fight the negative effects of unmanaged food waste.

Why is this important for Seychelles? Firstly we need to consider where much of our food comes from. We do consume locally produced produce, however a great deal is imported, with food flown in having a negative impact of the country's carbon footprint. Secondly there is the issue of uneaten food which is often simply discarded along with other waste and ends up on landfill sites. When this happens the food waste rots and produces methane gas – a potent greenhouse gas with 21 times the global warming potential of carbon dioxide. Recent research indicates that on average a Seychelles hotel produces 846 grams of food waste per client daily. When we consider that organic waste comprises almost half of all landfill content in Seychelles the problem – and the urgent need to do something about it - become clear.

The L'Archipel initiative, which has led to international recognition for the hotel, reduces the amount of food waste generated and saves money at point of purchasing and waste collection costs. This is a compelling argument for other tourism establishments to follow L'Archipel's example and introduce pro-environment programmes across every aspect of their operation. There is also the issue of guest perception. Visitors to Seychelles are increasingly aware of the need for responsible environmental behaviour. They have already compromised their carbon footprint simply by flying here and expect to see hotels doing everything they can to minimise any further negative impact on the environment – locally and globally.

L'Archipel is using new technology to reduce the food waste produced by its guests. Food and beverage staff use software to anticipate food requirements and order and prepare accordingly, thereby maximising the amount of served food which is consumed and minimise the percentage which is left uneaten. This is, of course, a difficult objective to achieve, however L'Archipel staff and clients have already seen dramatic improvements in the manner in which food is effectively managed at every stage of the chain – from the ordering and purchasing of food items to the disposal of 'unavoidable' waste (there will always be some).

Mr. Eddie d'Offay, the hotel's Deputy Managing Director, feels that the food management initiative has added considerable value to the hotel's 'green' toolkit. He commented: “We have been very happy to work with the Seychelles Sustainable Tourism Foundation and Pace Seychelles to further consolidate the hotel's clear commitment to environmental protection and sustainable tourism in Seychelles. This new programme sits well alongside our more established pro-environment activities and strategies. We use an intelligent energy management system in guest rooms which effectively reduces our AC energy consumption by 30% at no comfort-cost to the guest. The property is quickly moving towards 100% LED lighting systems which, in an average guest room, reduces the power demand by a massive 80%. L'Archipel has also invested in 244 Solar PV Panels. Most electricity in Seychelles is still generated through the burning of diesel fuels and our PV system saves about 28,850 liters of diesel fuel annually. Not burning this fuel saves 76.8 metric tons of Carbon Dioxide annually, which is the equivalent of removing 16 petrol driven cars from the road permanently.”

Additionally L'Archipel uses bio-technology cleaning products, resulting in the removal of over 43,000 litres of toxic chemicals per year from the property. The polluting output of a further 5 petrol driven cars is removed thanks to the use of ozone cold water dish-cleaning systems in the hotel kitchens. Various Ozone technologies are deployed to reduce the use of chemical cleaning agents in the kitchen and deliver safe food preparation zones. When we consolidate all of these fantastic initiatives it is no surprise that Hotel L'Archipel is one of only seven hotels with advanced sustainability recognition from Pace Seychelles, the leading Green Technologies supplier in the Indian Ocean region.

Mr. d'Offay concludes: “The key to successful implementation of this policy is to establish an effective dynamic between the kitchen & restaurant whereby all staff understand not only what the hotel is doing but why we are doing it. It's also important to communicate the positive impact our efforts are having upon the environment to our guests, something which, in our experience, they are always extremely happy to hear about. We very much hope that L'Archipel's environmentally responsible business approach will act as an inspiration and a realistic template for other tourism establishments. Together we can make a huge contribution to protecting the environment which, after all, is our principal selling point to visitors.”