

How many tourists can Seychelles accommodate?

Seychelles will conduct a feasibility study later on this year ahead of 2020 deadline on the moratorium for building large hotels on the archipelago.



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The moratorium was announced by the former President James Michel in June 2015. In 2017, in his State of the Nation's Address, President Danny Faure said that the government has decided to prolong the moratorium until the end of 2020. Large hotels are defined as those having 25 rooms or more.

"We have not reached half a million tourists per year so I think so far the figures are manageable. However the country needs to be mindful of the impact that mass tourism can have on a small island state like Seychelles such as on its environment if we are to increase this number," said Didier Dogley, the minister of tourism, civil aviation, ports and marine.

Seychelles, a group of 115 islands in the western Indian Ocean, presently has a 6,000-bed capacity; 63% of those beds are owned by locals.

Revenue and tourism arrivals

From January to early December last year, the Central Bank of Seychelles recorded over \$520m in earnings from the tourism industry.

Last year, 361,844 tourists landed in Seychelles, slightly higher than the 2017 figure of 349,861.

The figures for the beginning of this year from the National Bureau of Statistics record shows a 20% increase in visitor arrivals compared to the same period last year. In January there were 29,463 visitors compared to 24,543 for the same period last year. Germany remains the leading market with 7,833 tourists followed by France.

Despite recording an increase in tourist arrivals annually for the past five years, Dogley said that the figures are manageable for the island's population of 95,000.

Prior to the moratorium, the government had approved 3,000 to be shared among 18 large tourism establishments. The additional beds will bring the country's capacity to 9,000.

"We do not necessarily reach full capacity at any one time but presently with 6,000 beds, during peak season, there may be up to 10,000 visitors at once in the country," Dogley told SNA.

He added that an additional 3,000 beds "might bring the figures up to 16,000 during peak season."

"The study will give a clear picture on the state of tourism development in the country, and how we can maintain a balance between sustainable tourism and economic growth,"

Types of hotels

Dogley said that the feasibility study will look at the type of hotels the country needs as well as the locations so as not to have many tourism establishments in one area.

"There could be a lot of 3-star hotels but the earnings generated from that may not correspond to the country's economic target. Also, your demand might be for 4 or 5-star tourism establishments while you are focusing on a 3 star," he added.

Source: Seychelles News Agency

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