



2023 TOP 100 GOOD PRACTICE STORY

Title: Pioneering a Model of Sustainable Tourism in Bel Ombre

Destination, Country: Bel Ombre, Mauritius

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In the category: Destination Management Environment & Climate Thriving Communities
 Nature & Scenery Culture & Tradition Business & Marketing

The Story in a picture:

Breathtaking natural beauty, harmonious coexistence of land, sea and its people.



Summary:

Nestled in the South of Mauritius, **Bel Ombre Village is a model of sustainable tourism and stakeholders' engagement.** Bel Ombre Territory, managed by Rogers Hospitality in collaboration with local government and other stakeholders, embarked on a transformative journey towards sustainability, addressing multiple environmental challenges through innovative initiatives. Faced with issues such as high carbon footprint, food waste generation, inadequate waste management, vulnerability to climate change, and pollution risks, Bel Ombre Territory took proactive measures to regenerate the territory and promote a circular economy.

Through short circuit procurement and local buying, it reduced its carbon footprint and supported sustainable agriculture. Food waste reduction strategies, waste management segregations, and collaborations with local craftsmen for waste upcycling showcased their commitment to sustainability. Climate change mitigation efforts included beach erosion reduction, coral nurseries, and ecological restoration with the support of NGO's.

Bel Ombre Territory's eco-friendly practices significantly reduced pollution, embraced renewable energy, and achieved notable results such as reduced carbon footprint, minimized food waste, enhanced waste management, and increased resilience to climate change. The harmonious coexistence between natural beauty and sustainable practices exemplifies its commitment to creating a regenerative and environmentally conscious destination.



Good Practice Story:

Destination description

Brief background of the destination.

Far from the urban agitation and the tourist clichés, Bel Ombre is the harmonious meeting between the sea and the mountains. A peaceful sanctuary where nature thrives, making those populating it live and dream. Land of life, land of welcome. Here, every man and woman count. A place full of history, Bel Ombre is an ode to sharing, tolerance and living together. Individual fulfillment comes through collective well-being, making this resilient territory friendly and welcoming. Rich in authentic beauty, natural resources and people, Bel Ombre is the land of all possibility. An invitation to truly live. To discover and marvel. To meet and share. To open your heart. Proud of its history and its values, as much as its ambition and commitments, the region is reinventing itself as a territorial brand : Lamer, Later, Lavi. Like a vibrant tribute to its riches, its promise, expressed in creole, is synonymous with the authenticity of Bel Ombre. Bel Ombre Territory, is managed by Rogers Hospitality in collaboration with the local Government and stakeholders.

Issues faced

Problems/issues solved with the Good Practice Story.

Bel Ombre Territory faced several sustainability challenges that threatened its natural resources and environment. [General waste management issues, pollution, environmental impact linked to practices, endangered biodiversity]. Bel Ombre is a coastal village that is threatened also by climatic change and also involves many other stakeholders. With tourism development, an integrated and holistic approach had to be developed. The impact of tourism on the environment and climate had to be addressed to secure and sustain the attractiveness of Bel ombre.

Methods, steps, and tools applied

Solutions implemented to address the sustainability problems or issues.

As Bel Ombre has been developed as a tourist village for more than a decade now, Rogers Hospitality in 2021, embarked on a remarkable journey with a deep sense of responsibility towards the breathtaking paradise of Bel Ombre. Recognizing the pressing need for sustainable practices and mindful environmental stewardship, they launched their sustainability program, aptly named "Now For Tomorrow." Grounded in their unwavering commitment to building a better future, Rogers Hospitality dedicated themselves to aligning their efforts with the principles of the "Circular Economy" impact zone. Through innovative and efficient waste management practices, they set out to breathe new life into Bel Ombre, fostering a harmonious coexistence between nature and hospitality and the communities around. With determination, Rogers Hospitality embarked on a transformative quest, seeking to preserve and enhance the pristine beauty of Bel Ombre while inspiring others to join them on the path towards a brighter, more sustainable tomorrow.

Through its sustainability department, extensive consultations were made with environmental specialists, the communities, the local authorities and guests so as to understand the main challenges of the destination.

1. Short Circuit Procurement

In their quest to revitalize Bel Ombre's paradise, Rogers Hospitality recognized the importance of responsible purchasing practices. They embarked on an exciting journey, implementing a Sustainable Procurement Policy that would guide their every purchase. Rogers Hospitality wholeheartedly embraced the "farm to fork" concept, recognizing the immense value of locally sourced and

sustainable ingredients. In their quest to offer guests the freshest and most environmentally conscious dining experience, they continuously seek to source produce from local stakeholders.

Another example of their commitment to local sourcing while uplifting the local community, they sought out 18 dedicated and passionate locals, that were trained to smart agriculture practices. By purchasing vegetables directly from these locals that became skilled farmers, Rogers Hospitality not only ensures the highest quality produce for their guests but also nurtures a thriving local agricultural system rooted in environmental stewardship. With their Sustainable Procurement Policy in full swing, Rogers Hospitality made sure to prioritize seasonal products. This not only ensures freshness but also supports local farmers and minimizes the need for long-distance transportation. To further promote good practices, they developed a culinary charter that established guidelines for sustainable and ethical cooking practices, inspiring other establishments to follow their lead.

2. Waste Management

Rogers Hospitality understood the crucial role of effective waste management in preserving the beauty of Bel Ombre. They knew that a dedicated effort was needed, which led them to establish a Waste Management Division responsible for overseeing waste management across Heritage Resorts. To combat the pressing issue of food waste, Rogers Hospitality implemented innovative waste reduction processes. Through their commitment to ThePledge against Food Waste, they organized capacity-building programs that focused on teaching improved cooking techniques. By optimizing ingredient usage and minimizing waste at the preparation level, they significantly reduced their overall food waste.

But that wasn't the end of their waste management journey. Rogers Hospitality believed in giving back to the community and addressing issues of malnutrition. Through their FoodWise Partnership, they redistributed excess untouched food to local NGOs, ensuring it reached those in need. This not only prevented food waste but also provided nourishment to individuals who lacked access to regular meals.

In a remarkable collaboration, Rogers Hospitality joined forces with Agria's (a sister and nearby company) pig farm to divert food waste for animal consumption. By repurposing food scraps that would have otherwise gone to waste, they found an innovative solution that brought value to the environment and local farming practices.

3. Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation

With a deep commitment to combating climate change, Rogers Hospitality took bold steps to protect Bel Ombre's natural environment. They recognized the importance of preserving the stunning coastline and its delicate ecosystems. To mitigate the effects of beach erosion, they installed wave breakers, providing much-needed protection to the shores.

Rogers Hospitality understands the significance of coral reefs and their role in supporting marine life. In collaboration with local NGOs and international bodies, including the United Nations Development Program and Reef Conservation, they are currently finalizing an agreement for a small-scale coral nursery. This initiative not only will contribute to the preservation of reefs but will also serve as a powerful educational tool for guests and locals alike.

Through their proactive actions, they also achieved the prestigious UNESCO MAB Label for Bel Ombre, recognizing their efforts in protecting and preserving this unique ecosystem. Moreover, they embarked on a project to rehabilitate Jacotet River (water course bordering part of Bel Ombre) banks, creating an ecological corridor that embraces a ridge-to-reef approach. By adopting this comprehensive conservation strategy, they ensure the resilience of the entire ecosystem.

4. Pollution Control

Rogers Hospitality was determined to achieve excellence in pollution control. They pursued the renowned Green Key certification, a testament to their commitment to sustainable practices. To reduce emissions and minimize their ecological footprint, they implemented a range of measures across their operations.

Recognizing the impact of cleaning products on the environment, Rogers Hospitality made a conscious decision to adopt eco-friendly alternatives. They ensured that 75% of their cleaning products within Heritage Resorts were environmentally friendly, prioritizing those that were biodegradable and non-toxic.

Water, a precious resource, received careful attention as well. Rogers Hospitality treated 100% of the water used within their properties through a state-of-the-art water-treatment plant (STP).

In their pursuit of reducing greenhouse gas emissions, Rogers Hospitality embraced energy-efficient equipment within Bel Ombre. From lighting to heating and cooling systems, they optimized their energy usage, effectively reducing their energy consumption.

Rogers Hospitality's tireless efforts in efficient waste management and environmental stewardship serve as an inspiring example for the hospitality industry. Through sustainable procurement, waste reduction, climate change mitigation and adaptation, and pollution control, they have demonstrated their unwavering commitment to preserving Bel Ombre's paradise and nurturing a circular economy.

Key success factors

Critical elements that led to successfully solving the issues.

The successful implementation of the sustainable initiatives in Bel Ombre Territory can be attributed to the following key factors:

- Strong commitment from Rogers Hospitality to sustainability principles.
- Collaborative partnerships with local organizations, NGOs, and experts.
- Adoption of comprehensive policies and charters to guide sustainable practices.
- Capacity-building programs to train farmers, artisans, and staff.
- Compliance with local and international standards and certifications.
- Integration of sustainability practices across all levels of operations.

Lessons learned

Challenges faced while implementing the Good Practice and their solutions.

Implementing the Good Practice in Bel Ombre Territory faced a few challenges, which were addressed through effective solutions. The key lessons learned include:

- The importance of stakeholder (communities, authorities, guests and employees* alike) engagement and collaboration for successful sustainability initiatives.
- The need for continuous monitoring and improvement to ensure long-term impact.
- The value of investing in training and capacity building to empower local communities.
- The benefits of adopting circular economy principles for waste management and procurement practices.
- Guests often do not relate to initiatives implemented as experiences have not been developed in accordance to these initiatives. We recently started working on guest experiences in which they can participate in to ensure a better understanding of our initiatives.
- * Engaging teams has proved to have significant results in our initiatives as they need to relate to our actions to better help in implementing them (bottom-up approach).

Achievements and Results

Direct and indirect results of the Good Practice.

The Good Practice initiatives in Bel Ombre have yielded significant achievements and results, including:

- 90% of locally and regionally sourced products within operations which helped reduce our carbon footprint.
- Substantial reduction in food waste through capacity building and partnerships with local NGOs: 463KGs of surplus food donated in FY22-23
- Effective waste management practices implemented through a dedicated division.
- 66% of waste diverted from the landfill through recycling, upcycling and composting
- Reduced pollution through the use of eco-friendly products.

Tips for other destinations

Your suggestions or recommendations for other destinations facing the same issues or implementing similar solutions

For other destinations facing similar sustainability issues or aiming to implement similar solutions, the following recommendations are suggested:

- Prioritize local and regional sourcing
- Establish partnerships with local farmers, NGOs, and experts to address food waste and promote sustainable agriculture.
- Invest in waste management infrastructures and create dedicated divisions or teams for efficient waste management.
- Support and promote upcycling initiatives, providing training and opportunities for local communities.
- Adopt green certifications and standards to demonstrate commitment and enhance credibility.
- Foster collaboration among stakeholders, including the government, private sector, and local communities, to achieve shared sustainability goals.

By implementing these recommendations, destinations can contribute to the circular economy, regenerate their territories, and become recognized for their sustainable initiatives.

Recognitions and Additional references

Recognitions and awards the Good Practice received and supporting evidence.

UNESCO MAB label

Small Luxury Hotels – Considerate collections

Green key certification

2022 : Heritage Le Telfair, Bel Ombre Nature Reserve

2023 : Heritage Awali, Bel Ombre Nature Reserve